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SKIP CyberHam

February 1998

Amateur Radio - Computers - Communications - Internet

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NEWSBRIEFS

AES changes hands

Amateur Electronic Supply has changed hands, effective January 1, 1998. The new owner is Amateur Electronic Supply LLC, headed by Phil Majerus, a prominent Wisconsin businessman. Now in its 41st year, AES was founded in 1957 by Terry Sterman, W9DIA, who became interested in ham radio by working in his dad's electronics shop and went on to have a substantial impact on the ham radio marketplace. The retailer's current management team and most employees will remain in place, and a spokesman said it's "business as usual." AES expects to have its latest Amateur Radio products catalog available at the Dayton Hamvention in mid-May. The company, headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has branches in Ohio, Florida, and Nevada.

SPUTNIK PS2/RS-17 OFFICIALLY DECLARED DEAD

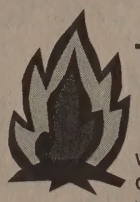
It's official. The Sputnik PS2/RS-17 mini-satellite is a silent key. It ceased transmitting on December 29, 1997. The little satellite, a one-third scale replica of the original Sputnik 1, beep-beeped its way around the globe for 55 days, more than two weeks longer than it had been projected to last. The 200-mW transmitter was powered by lithium batteries.

The Sputnik PS-2 was launched by hand from the Russian Mir space station on November 4, 1997, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the launching of the original Sputnik by the USSR in 1957. The original Sputnik only transmitted for about one month.

The Sputnik PS2 beacon, on 145.82, was widely monitored and recorded around the world. The satellite was fabricated by students in Russia and on France's Reunion Island. Sputnik 40 Years, which sponsored the satellite project, said the last known recordings of the Sputnik PS2 beacon were made on December 29 at approximately 2100 UTC by a ham in Washington and by FR1AJ on Reunion Island. At the time, the data indicated an internal temperature of 40 degrees C.

Those tracking the satellite reported that the Sputnik PS2's beacon signal had continued to get weaker as the end approached. Even after the beep-beep ceased, however, the satellite's unmodulated oscillator continued to transmit for a while longer.

Reception reports go to The Radio Club of Jules Reydellet school on Reunion Island. Those whose reports are confirmed will receive an approximately 6x9-inch color certificate on high-quality paper with number identification and the radio club stamp. Requests for these certificates should be made only by letter with an SASE (6x9 inch) and two (2) IRCs. Do not send requests via e-mail! The mailing address is FR5KJ Radio Club, 103 Rue de la Republique, 97 489 Saint Denis Cedex, Reunion Island.



SIX METERS TURNS HOT FOR NEW YEAR

The new year arrived with a bang on six meters—once again demonstrating why it's known as "The Magic Band." Rick, K6SIX, was among those benefiting from the apparent F2-layer propagation on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day available from some parts of the US. "I thought it was going to be a great start to 1998 when I worked ZF1DC," he said, "but just an hour later, I worked ZL3NW in grid RE66 on 50.125!"

Others also managed US-to-ZL contacts. "What a way to start the new year!!!" exclaimed Ron, K5LLL, who worked both ZL2TPY and ZL3NW just a few minutes into the new year (GMT).

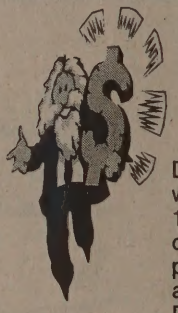
Additional stations posted equally enthusiastic messages on the Internet reflectors. "WOW! what a way to start the New Year," wrote WB2QLP in Florida after he'd just worked several South American stations on six. "I think Cycle 23 has a lot of DX in store for us."

Mike, ZL3TIC/ZL3SIX, reported hearing American Samoa and the FO5DR beacon (50.050 MHz) as well as several US stations.

Newsline reports that Dave, KC6WFS, in California, turned on his old Gonset G-50 AM transceiver and worked Oklahoma and several other AM DX contacts. Other US stations managed to work stateside DX on FM.

Oscar, CO2OJ, in Cuba reported working several US stations, including some as far away as California and Texas.

ARRL antenna guru Dean Straw, N6BV, speculates the propagation involved was probably multiple F2 hops, most likely combined with sporadic E.



DXCC FEE HIKE EXPLAINED

New fees for the DXCC program that went into effect January 1 will only cover about one half of the program's substantial annual shortfall. The DXCC program costs at least $100,000 more each year to administer than it collects in user fees, despite greater efficiency and a smaller staff than in the past. That explanation from ARRL Executive Vice President David Sumner, K1ZZ, came in the wake of comments from DXCC participants who were unhappy about the fee increases.

Sumner noted that the League "had a difficult financial year in 1996," when it posted a $700,000 operating loss. To turn things around, Sumner said, the Board of Directors determined to curb continuing losses as well as cut other costs and seek additional income sources. In the case of DXCC and other membership service programs that serve a portion of the membership, these efforts focused on ways to reduce costs or to make the programs more self-sustaining through user fees.

"The DXCC program is expensive to administer in its present form," Sumner said, pointing out that the League plans to take advantage of new technology in an effort to further cut the program's costs without affecting its integrity. New software scheduled to come on-line early this year should increase the speed of DXCC processing. "After

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Custom Metal Fabrication
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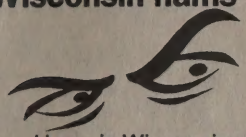
NEWSBRIEFS

that, attention will turn to a program that will allow members to file DXCC applications electronically, which we anticipate will lead to further savings without sacrificing integrity in any way," he said.

"Everyone wants the DXCC program to continue and to provide the kind of service that members deserve." Sumner emphasized that the League "never considered as an option" any steps that might have affected the integrity of the DXCC program.

Wisconsin hams eye bill



Hams in Wisconsin plan to monitor a bill to be introduced in the next legislative session that could have implications for ham radio mobile operators. The measure, Assembly Bill 680, states in part, "No person while driving a motor vehicle shall be so engaged or occupied with the use of a mobile telecommunications device as to interfere with the safe driving of such vehicle or as to impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic." While the bill is aimed primarily at cell phone users, Wisconsin hams will keep a close eye on the measure to make sure ham radio is not adversely affected. The bill has had a first reading and has been referred to the Assembly's Committee on Highways and Transportation. For a copy of the bill, see http://www.legis.state.wi.us/billtext/AB680.pdf.—thanks to Jim Romelfanger, K9ZZ, and others

The February 1st *W5YI REPORT* reveals that Canada is considering delicensing its Amateur Radio Service which "came as a complete shock to Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC). A comprehensive article appears in *The Canadian Amateur*, the journal of RAC.

SKIP ON TAPE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

SKIP is put on tape every month for the benefit of the blind or visually impaired. These tapes are available if requested and postage is paid both ways. If you are interested in this valuable service, contact Ms. Desaree Stewart, Library for the Blind, 420 Platt Street, Daytona Beach, FL 32114. **Phone 1-800-226-6075.**

W3CUL and W3VH Honored

ARRL Board names 1997 Humanitarian Award winners

The ARRL Board of Directors has presented the 1997 ARRL International Humanitarian Award to Al Burke, W3VR, and Mae Burke, W3CUL (SK), in recognition of their lifetime of public service of traffic handling "and for their unique dedication to this facet of Amateur Radio." The action came January 16 as the Board met for its first meeting of the new year in Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

Al Burke started handling message traffic by ham radio before the start of World War II. Mae Burke, who died last November at age 86, earned a historic record of traffic handling honors over her lifetime handling overseas traffic for US service personnel, MARS, Red Cross and other emergency messages during the Korean, Vietnam and Cold War eras. Much of her civilian traffic included messages on behalf of disaster victims. In 1956, she won the fifth Edison Radio Amateur Award for public service. At that time, she operated daily in six CW nets and handled some 312,000 messages between 1949 and 1957. The Board also cited both Burkes for serving as traffic handling mentors to others.

FCC Issues First Gate 4 Vanity Grants

Be on the lookout for another round of new call signs. Right on schedule, on January 7, the FCC issued approximately 600 new call signs to those who were among the 900 or so who filed vanity call sign applications on December 2, the opening day for Gate 4! Another 300 or so applications ended up in the work in process (WIPs) stack and have been processed. The FCC issued another 79 vanity call signs on January 8.

Earlier this week, the FCC in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, set the stage by processing all vanity applications received through December 1, 1997, the day before vanity Gate 4 opened. The FCC granted 120 new call signs on January 6. The FCC reports that during December, it got 497 paper applications and 1873 electronic applications.

The Furr family of Chapel Hill, North Carolina—home of the University of North Carolina—took advantage of Gate 4 to standardize their suffixes to, what else, UNC! Mom and Dad are UNC graduates, and one of their daughters (19-year-old Mary, K5UNC) is about to graduate from UNC. Dad is Walter "Buddy" Furr III, who got his K4UNC call sign under Gate 2. Mom, Judy, is K2UNC. The couple's other two daughters are nine-year-old Cindy, K1UNC and 16-year-old Rebecca, K3UNC, a high school junior. Judy Furr says her husband "is a major UNC fan." The youngest daughter, Cindy, already holds a General ticket and has passed her 20 WPM code test on her way to the Extra. The Furr family—all ARRL members—plans to debut the new call signs on a local 2-meter net this week.

In the same vein, WE4UNC went to Judy Smith of Pulaski, Tennessee.

Among the other new call signs were KB1USA, KZ8ZZZ, and WA7AAA.

Deb McKay of Hamburg, New Jersey, formerly N2TTP, obtained WX2DEB. She's the Skywarn coordinator for Sussex County, New Jersey. KA1THY went to Kathy Swann of Coventry, Rhode Island. Many other "name" and "initial" call signs were among the batch issued on January 7.

Coping with your new call sign

Changing your call sign entails a bit of housekeeping. For instance, if you have a new vanity call sign and are active on packet, you should alert the sysop of your packet BBS of your new on-air identity. You'll also need to change the call sign in your packet TNC firmware and in your ham radio software (communication and logging software, for example). If your call sign is also part of your e-mail address, you'll want to update that with your Internet service provider, as well. ARRL field appointees should alert section managers too. A new call sign also can mean a new club or ARRL field appointment badge, new QSL cards, new business cards (if they carry your call sign), and maybe new license plates. The list goes on. One thing you won't have to do is let ARRL HQ know. ARRL members' call signs are automatically changed as the FCC database is updated.—thanks to This Week in Amateur Radio

From the Editor

A most unlikely topic

I never thought I'd see the day that a letter from a CB organization would arrive in the mailbox of the magazine, much less that I would be inclined to react to it. The letter was brief and to the point. The letter reads, "***The CB Radio Operators of West Palm Beach County Florida need your help. Three of your fellow Hams are harassing us with their obscene and insulting talk on our frequencies.***"

The letter goes on to name the three individuals who I won't name but a check of the SAM database confirms their names, calls and geographical location. One is advanced class and two others are extras. Their ages are similar between 38-45.

The writer goes on, "***Please ask them to STOP!! After all they are Hams and have plenty of frequencies to talk on. Your help with this unpleasant situation is appreciated.***"

First of all, SKIP Magazine has never been known as an advocate of CB radio operation, nor has it railed on endlessly against what was perceived to be uncontrolled, disorganized and dispicable mayhem that thankfully, was usually carried out on their own spectra playground. Hams are a pious lot, priding themselves on the fact that they strictly adhered to acceptable standards of conduct, and operated equipment within the legal standards set forth by the FCC. Most of their beefs were that CB operators showed total disregard for decency, etiquette and regulations; and interference with neighborhood electronic equipment always seemed to be blamed on hams. Of course there was the occasional invasion of a CBer on the amateur frequencies. The news media did little to clarify the distinction between CBers and Hams. In most cases, anyone that communicated via the airwaves with their "walkie talkies" was a CB operator, a good Samaritan who notified 9-1-1 of a bad accident used his "CB radio" in the car, but Tillie Goodbottom's TV interference, phone interference and talking dentures were caused by that Ham with the ugly tower down the street.

But then, times have changed. Unless the letter from the CB club is a deliberate misrepresentation which I don't perceive it to be, we have travelled the full circle. It appears we have an organization of CB operators who wish to operate within their assigned band without the intrusion and interference from individuals with ham licenses. However, anyone can operate on the CB bands, including hams, but hams are not allowed to use their callsigns or equipment to transmit outside the assigned amateur radio bands. In a sense, a ham cannot be a ham when on the CB band. There was a day when a ham faced a reprimand or loss of license for such activities. Apparently no more. For whatever reasons, the FCC seems less inclined to vigorously prosecute violators (CBers or Hams).

The gentleman from the West Palm Beach CB Radio Operators appeals to the Editor to ask them to stop. My response to him would be that asking the offenders to stop would harvest the same rewards as asking the rogue CB operator of years past to back off. The reward would be an increase in the level of abuse, profanity, jamming, sabotage and even physical assault. With virtually no existing enforcement authorities, the CB and amateur radio bands have become a wireless battleground. Only a few years ago, I might have suggested that the CBers are getting a dose of their own medicine and perhaps taken measures to see that the offending hams were prosecuted. But now, what's the use?

In recent years, the complexion of amateur radio has changed as has the overall society itself. Ham radio reacted a bit more slowly since the amateur community was bonded or united in their commitment to operating standards, procedures, and ethical conduct.

Gradually the standards for everything and anything in the overall society were relaxed. Seemingly, everybody acquired rights. If you didn't have them, sue for them. Exclusion was a dangerous and naughty word.

Eventually, the ARRL softened requirements for entry level licenses ostensibly to attract more people to amateur radio. The Morse code requirement came under siege. The ITU dropped Morse code. Initially, the ranks of amateur radio grew by leaps and bounds. From the perspective of seasoned hams, the invasion was by CBers, XYLs, kids or anyone with the notion they

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wanted to talk on the air. Accessability to inexpensive 2-meter HTs along with the infusion of new Techs made "repeater operators" the new breed of ham radio.

An uneasy peace existed between the new breed and the old timers. But one could see the train wreck coming. Coupled with the near invisibility of the enforcement arm of the FCC and a new breed of hams who never had the opportunity to fully absorb the culture of ham radio, the new breed was less inclined to observe the long established standards for ham radio operation.

Chewing the fat used to be the interaction between two hams on a mutually agreed frequency. One could expect the conversation to be civil, without profanity and generally free of political discussion. With the erosion of standards, we saw individuals laying claim to frequencies as their own, spewing profanity with impunity, broadcasting on the amateur bands and general disregard or ignorance of the standards hams assiduously observed for many years. Unencumbered with laws and regulations, the terrorists from the old CB free-for-all, having found an easy entry to amateur radio, soon resurrected their old habits.

Lately, a casual observer could easily conclude that amateur radio is a playground where jamming, confrontation and profanity is good sport. Kerchunking a distant repeater is a form of DXing. The dedicated ham radio operators still exist but their exploits and good deeds are obscured by the zany actions of others. Often, for their attempt to conform, they are scorned, ridiculed and interfered with.

The arrival of the computer and Internet on the scene is often blamed for the declining interest in ham radio. The Internet with thousands of chat rooms and Internet Phone having access to the entire world provides the fundamental tools for personal communication with millions of diverse people. There is no need for a transmitter, tower, beams and the need to obtain a license. Propagation is of no concern. A quality computer can be purchased for much less than a decent amateur radio station. Besides, the computer has a multitude of other uses that benefit the family or business. Is it any wonder that many people fail to see a compelling reason to obtain an amateur license?

On the other hand, a computer with access to the Internet offers a wealth of resources to the amateur. There are numerous software programs to aid the amateur in design, operate equipment or as a repository for information. The Internet offers access to hundreds of amateur-radio related websites; some of them active DX clusters. So if computers/Internet seems responsible for the declining interest, one could speculate there was no desire to pursue amateur radio in the first place. An amateur radio operator is like a mountain climber in that both crave the challenge presented by their particular, if not peculiar interest.

Amateur radio faces its greatest challenge in establishing and enforcing standards. One should have reasonable qualifications to obtain a license and incentive to abide by them. Punishment for violating the rules should be swift and uncompromising.The amateur license should be something one earns, cherishes, honors and zelously protects.

Until that time, order without control will continue to erode. Soon one will see the civil members of that order, consumed with rage over those who perpetrated the disorder, become abusers and violaters themselves.

The actions of the licensed amateurs against CBers is disgusting, if true. It is especially reprehensible since the hams are advanced and extra class. One would think they might have learned the limitations of their "licensed" activities. It appears they might be more adept at passing tests than learning the lessons.

As the elitists in Washington become more aware of the dollar value of the frequency spectrum, amateur radio operators (and CBers) should be concerned that the use of the assigned frequencies will be critically scrutinized. Radio hobbyists need to band together, set standards and priorities, then effectively lobby to have them implemented. From all appearances, it looks like it will take a major restructuring of the current system. That might be as complicated as restructuring the IRS. The impedus for effective change must come from the rank and file, hard-core amateurs whose genuine interests are at stake.

BBC begins live broadcasting on Internet

LONDON, ENGLAND, 1998 JAN 16 (NB) — By Martyn Williams, Newsbytes. The BBC World Service has added its name to the list of international broadcasters that are making their programs available over the Internet. Beginning this week, the BBC has begun broadcasting a live feed of its English language network over the Internet.

The online service is available in Real Audio format and users can select one of two feeds, either 14.4-kilobits per second or 28.8-kilobits per second. Users will hear the World Service version broadcast to North America, which is in English 24-hours a day. The new live service can be found on the World Wide Web at:

http://www.audionet.com/bbc/

In addition to the live feed, the BBC has previously been using Real Audio to make some of its programs on the Internet. The World Service offers its latest hourly news bulletin, World Update, Europe Today and Newshour on demand from its Web site at http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/ .

The World Radio Network, http://www.wrn.org , also carries BBC World Service German language programs several times a day and the BBC's domestic Radio 5 Live service is available live on the Internet, except when certain copyrighted sporting events are carried.

The BBC's domestic services have recently embraced the Internet with the launch of a more comprehensive Web site, http://www.bbc.co.uk , and a non-stop news service, designed to compete with sites like CNN, at http://news.bbc.co.uk .

FCC "Internet fee" notice is old news: The FCC's trying to staunch a flow of e-mail concerning a non-existent issue. Several individuals, including some hams, have circulated or posted "warnings" on the Internet concerning the possibility that telephone companies would be permitted to charge by the minute for Internet access. Some recipients of this "warning" were advised that the telephone companies were trying to slip this past the public before users realized what was happening. The "warning" mentioned a February 1998 date to send comments to the FCC. In short, this is old news. The FCC did issue a Notice of Inquiry on this topic in late 1996 (with a reply comment deadline in February 1997), but it subsequently rejected the idea.

The Last Ordeal

(Fiction)

-by Herbert L. Foster, AD4UA

Nancy sat quietly in the plain wooden chair in the sparsely furnished room. Her hands were folded loosely on her lap, and her eyes gazed dully at the floor. Her mind seemed numb after answering all the myriad questions that had been hurled at her. The time for speech and action was over, she realized. It was just as she had always imagined that a room on Death Row must be like, including the priest who stood quietly at her side, praying. The door opened quietly, and a police sergeant looked in. Compassion showed in his face. "They are ready for you ," he said, and stood by the door. She nodded slightly and getting to her feet, sighed deeply. Walking down the corridor, flanked by the priest and the sergeant on either side, she wondered for the umpteenth time how a simple interest in Morse code could lead something like this. Her mind sped backward over the months, and the story began to replay in her mind. She watched, as a spectator, as events unfolded.

Nancy was a secretary. She was good. She took deep satisfaction in her expertise, and glowed inwardly each time she was called from the pool for a new task. In the office, she had status. She had standing. She was up there on the totem pole. What a contrast to her life at home she thought, bitterly. Her husband could be charitably described as dominant, and while she had no quarrel with that, still she would have liked to be recognized as an accomplished operator in her own field. An entity in her own right. None of this for Bob. It was always a case of "That's the way I see it! Now be quiet!" It was never that crude, of course, but the body language was always there.

Thus it was that she became friendly with a police sergeant who always came in to the coffee shop on the ground floor of her building for lunch at the time when she herself was arriving. They chatted about many subjects, but the most frequent topic was ham radio. Bill was an avid ham and loved to talk about his adventures. He carried with him a small device that could emit the sounds of Morse code, and from time to time he'd demonstrate its action. While Nancy understood none of the sounds she heard, still it seemed interesting that such noises could actually mean something. To satisfy her curiosity, Bill would occasionally slow down the speed of the code and spell out a few short simple words. Nancy grew fascinated and before long began to learn some of the characters.

There came a time when they both discovered that she knew the entire alphabet and most of the punctuation marks and the more important pro signs. The next day Bill came in with a straight key and another device that he claimed would be her friend. He explained that she could plug the telegraph key and a headset into the box and by setting up certain commands she could have a conversation with an artificial ham generated by the device. She was delighted with the idea, and when Bill told her she could take the thing home as a long term loan, she eagerly accepted.

Nancy took to using the memory keyer, as Bill called it, in the evenings at home, after dinner. While her masterful husband read the newspaper or watched television, Nancy would engage in long conversations with the "ham" that was generated by the keyer. Bill had explained to her that ham radio operators called this sort of conversation a QSO. The key would generate a new "ham" every evening, and she would revel in the lengthy QSO. Bob, following a brief look at what his wife was doing, dismissed it as a meaningless toy and devoted his attention to world affairs. He contemptuously referred to her pastime as child's play.

As Nancy became more and more involved with her artificial conversations, and discussed them with Bill at lunch, Bill offered her some manuals. He explained that they would teach her what the hobby was all about and she'd learn some of the terms her electronic friends were bandying about. She dived into the thick books eagerly.

Nancy's alert, adventuresome mind soaked up the information like a sponge. As her skill at the straight telegraph key improved, so did her knowledge of the technical side of amateur radio forge ahead. Bill repeatedly urged her to take the exams and earn her ham license. But Nancy had no interest in that direction, and became instead more and more interested in her electronics QSOs with the memory keyer. One "ham" in particular became almost a staple in her imaginary hobby, and she engaged in lengthy chats with him. It wasn't long before Nancy's husband began to notice that she was receiving some benefit from these sessions with the keyer and also noticed that she was not quite so much under his control. He therefore began to not only deride her activities, but tried to get her to stop. When his efforts in that direction failed, he became abusive, threatening to stop her by physical force in need be. Escalation set in and now events reached toward a climax. Bob took to hiding her equipment, but Nancy stood her ground and located the keyer and the iambic paddle she'd progressed to. Bob became increasingly violent and Nancy continued to resist his most earnest efforts. Bill, to whom she relayed the results of the nightly battles grew concerned, and when she related that her electronic ham had taken to urging her to kill Bob, he almost panicked. He explained that suggestions of this sort were almost certainly being made by her subconscious mind and not by the keyer. These ideas, he insisted, should be strongly thrust out of her mind. She continued, however, to receive these destructive urges, although she did her best to reject them. Thus, the scene was set for the night it all came to a focus.

Bob grew assertive and demanded that the nonsense stop at once. Nancy stood her ground and even accelerated the battle by removing the phones and allowing the dits and dahs of Morse code to sound aloud in the room. Code, while being close to music to the ears of a ham operator skilled at the discipline, can drive a person not so skilled out of his mind. The pressure mounted. Nancy's blue eye flashed fire and her long blond hair tossed, swirling as she vigorously rejected Bob's demands. His face grew red and a vein in his neck began to throb. His breathing became a frantic panting. The tension grew and grew to a point that was more than he could bear, and his heart, weakened by his sedentary life style, gave up.

His voice choked off, became silent, and Bob pitched forward on his face. Nancy, now frightened, ran to his side. A rapid checked revealed no pulse nor breathing. Hands shaking, she rushed to the telephone and dialed 911. To the answering operator she gasped, "I've killed my husband!" Shortly, the room was filled with people. Police and paramedics seemed to her to be everywhere, as events swiftly moved out of her control.

The scene shifted now, and her imagination moved to a replay of the sparsely furnished room at the police station, where a police lieutenant, aided by her sergeant friend and the Medical Examiner repeatedly explained to her troubled mind that she had not killed her husband. Actually it was his own explosive temper coupled with a weak heart that had been responsible. Slowly, she accepted the knowledge of her innocence, but the heavy feeling of guilt remained like a dark shadow just behind her.

Bill was her strength during the somber days that followed, attempting to bring her mind to accept what her brain already knew; that she was innocent of Bob's death and not only could but should get on with her life.

It was Bill who, stressing that Nancy had all the necessary knowledge and skill to pass the tests for an amateur radio operator's license, urged her to present herself at the next scheduled examination. It would give her a new outlook on the world. He was joined in this by her parish priest, who also happened to a ham operator. Together, the three appeared at the examination room and the questions began.

Nancy had gone after the top license; the Extra Class. "You may as well shoot for the top grade," Bill insisted. Her priest added his voice. "Reach for the brass ring!" he urged. So Nancy entered upon the long succession of papers and questions. The seemingly endless series of tests began, as she considered one question after another. Her scientific calculator came into use as she grappled with rectangular versus polar notation, and other mathematical points. Finally, she checked off the last question and sat back, feeling drained.

Now, with the tests all behind, successfully passed, her mind returned to the present, and she found herself approaching the room where she would be tested for Morse code. She entered the room slowly, with Bill on one side and the priest on the other. Sitting down at the indicated table, she donned the headset and began her last ordeal. She nodded to the Volunteer Examiner when the test message asked in code if the volume was satisfactory. The staccato chatter of Morse code filled her phones as she bent to the paper before her, pen in hand. Five minutes later it was miraculously over and the VE handed her the sheet containing ten questions concerning the coded message that had been sent. Much of the message she had merely listened to without copying anything on paper, but she easily pulled the answers from her memory. Another VE took her completed paper and moments later a crowd of beaming hams surrounded her, congratulating the newest Extra Class Amateur Radio Operator.

The End

Do we really need this computer?

As the technology marches on, the spin-meisters dressed in their multicolored clean room outfits would like you to believe that you should spend over two thousand dollars every couple of years. But, do we really need the latest offerings?

With each release of a new family of processors, there was always a new operating environment that accompanied it. The 386 chip added a memory manager to crack that 640K boundary. The 486 really ran Windows 3 nicely, and with the release of Windows 95, the Pentium chip and cheap memory made it run smoothly.

But, the Pentium Pro was really kind of a dud. It was brought out to run Windows NT and other pure 32 bit operating systems. NT is a good operating system and runs beautifully here on my office desk but it's definitely not a good choice for a home system as it doesn't support DOS gaming very well. And gaming is probably the only compelling reason to buy the latest and greatest computer. The PPro was very expensive to make and the proprietary nature of the socket interface kept motherboard prices artificially high (thank you very little). Market demand and the competition from Cyrix and AMD forced Intel into upgrading the Pentium to MMX rather than the newer Socket 8 sibling. It's ironic now to see the Pentium Pro obsolete while the Pentium classic is still selling.

The current state of the art offering is the Pentium II. These chips come with the latest advances in synchronous memory technology, support for huge memory subsystems and a new high speed graphics bus, the AGP. At about a thousand dollars more for a fully loaded Pentium II system, just what do I get for the extra dough.

Well, there's no question that they are faster. The latest benchmarks tag a P II system at up to fifty percent faster than a same speed Pentium or P5 clone. The new graphics bus and the faster memory are certainly part of the reason.

For my normal computer tasks, I really don't need the extra performance. The newest from Microsoft, Windows 98, is out in Beta form and if you load the new active desktop that comes with Internet Explorer 4, you're just about there. I've tried it. It's OK but I turned it off after a couple of days. Networking and disk drive performance is limited by device interface technology, not the performance of the processor. Sound cards still primarily run on the ISA bus at a whopping 3 megabytes per second. Motion video uses hardware accelerators designed into the video cards and the pipe out to the Internet is still no higher than 50 Kbits per second.

What's driving this latest push to upgrade? It's the games... With flashy graphics and real time full screen action, video games are the only reason to upgrade to the latest and greatest. At up to a million pixels per frame and 75 frames per second, the best of the games place a huge demand on computer horsepower. All of the latest also takes advantage of third person three dimensional renderings. This latest style of gaming common to the Nintendo 64 and Sony Playstation is also the choice for new releases on the PC. 3D Graphics like requires a large amount of video memory for textures and a high performance engine for calculating the edges of the polygons that form the rendered objects. The latest and greatest video cards actually include a RISC processor core that performs calculations on the vectors provided by the host processor.

The most capable of the 3D graphics cards can implement most of the calculations with only minimal support from the host computer. These cards can be added to a competent Pentium MMX based system and provide stunning graphics for gaming and excellent performance for all other desktop computer uses.

With the money that you save, you can buy the software that your system was designed to run. Or maybe, just maybe use it for something else on the list.

As chip makers and box builders continue to improve by leaps and bounds, there needs to be a break in an enabling technology to demand the spiraling performance. The slick new game offerings are not enough enticement to drop the extra cash. A quantum leap in Internet access bandwidth could be just the infusion the rest of the industry needs to make a case for their best.

Look for it!

73's Steve

E-MAIL ELMERS DEBUT IN DAYTON

Here's an idea that some other clubs might want to imitate. The Miami Valley FM Association last month announced its E-mail Elmer program. The system allows new or prospective hams in Dayton and Southwestern Ohio—or even experienced amateurs who are venturing into a new aspect of the hobby—to send an e-mail request for assistance. Volunteer on-line Elmers then can provide a response in the "Elmer" tradition of mentoring new or less-experienced hams.

"Today, many hams prepare for their license exams through classroom programs, and the individual Elmer's touch isn't as common as it once was," said MVFMA President Fred Peerenboom, KE8TQ, of Dayton. "The E-mail Elmer program is an attempt to restore this long tradition." Peerenboom said the club hopes the initial e-mail exchange be the start of an ongoing Elmer relationship in the best tradition of Amateur Radio."

Hams in the Dayton area or in Southwestern Ohio may use the Elmer Server simply by sending an e-mail message to elmer@febo.com and posing the ham radio question they'd like to have answered. Users will get a machine-generated confirmation, and, within a few days, they'll get a response from one or more of the volunteer Elmers.

For more information, or to volunteer as an E-mail Elmer, contact KE8TQ at 937-256-4355; e-mail ke8tq@febo.com.

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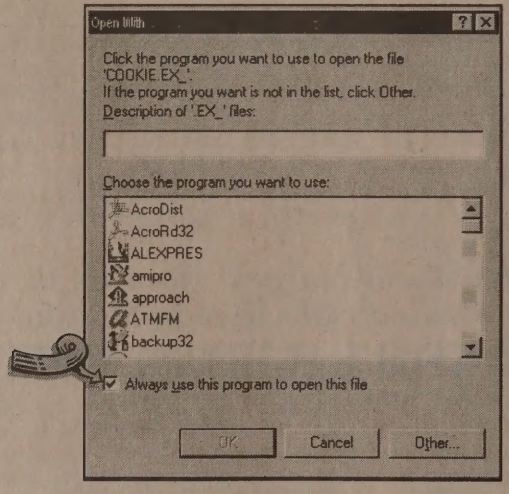
Windows for Weenies

File Association

Firstly...what's that? It's Microsoft's well-intentioned scheme to eliminate the user's need to make a decision. In theory, certain files are better opened with certain applications. For instance, if a file on your system is a readme.doc, it was probably prepared as a Microsoft Word document and best opened using Microsoft Word. In other words the file is associated with Microsoft Word. If you look at all the files in various directories, many of them will have an icon corresponding to the program used to open the file. If you double click on the file having the icon beside it, the file opens using Microsoft Word. The icon uses Word Express.

A mostly successful attempt was made to anticipate every file attribute ever devised and associate the file attribute (that's the data appearing after the dot in a filename) with the program designed or best suited to view the file. All this stuff is stored for handy reference in the Windows Explorer under View>Options and select the File Types tab. If you scroll down to Microsoft Word Document and highlight it, you will note under file type details that attributes of .doc, .rtf, and .dot files are opened using MS Word. Take a look around and see all the different extensions and you can see the assigned file association. Probably one of the most commonly seen and used is .txt or plain text files, often seen as ReadMe.txt. Highlight it and you'll see it probably opens with the notepad.

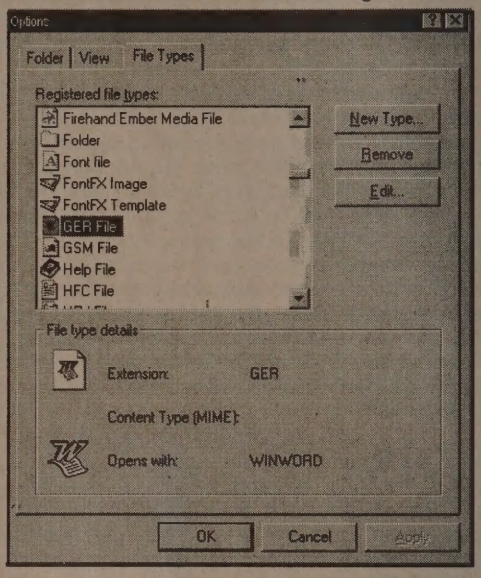
All this is all well and good until you install a program that seizes control of files with certain attributes and changes the file association. For example, I had all my bitmap (.bmp) files configured to open in Photoshop but when I installed one of my beloved "30-day trial" shareware programs (Firehand Ember) it changed my file association for all the bitmap files to its own. The other situation occurs after you've downloaded a file with some arbitrary extension like .1st, .yuk, .xyz or other such things. When you double click on the file, chances are the computer won't know what to do, so it pops up the Open With window and gives you the list of programs



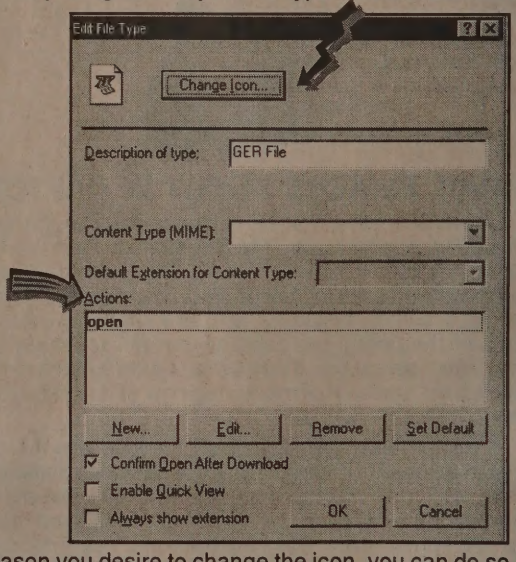
from which you choose the one you wish to use to open the file. But, there is a built in hazard that is often overlooked. If you will note down in the lower left corner there is a checkmark beside, "**Always uses this program to open the file**". That's the hazard folks. If you're not sure you are selecting the correct program, be sure to uncheck this box or you are seemingly stuck forever with a wrong file association. That's unless you learn Mr. Weenie's procedure to unassociate or change the association. I've found scads of people who have fallen into the incorrect file association trap and thought they were doomed for eternity. There is a way out.

Changing the File Association

Open My Computer>File>Options and you'll be presented with a window with Folder, View and File Types tabs. As you will note, there are a multitude of registered file types.

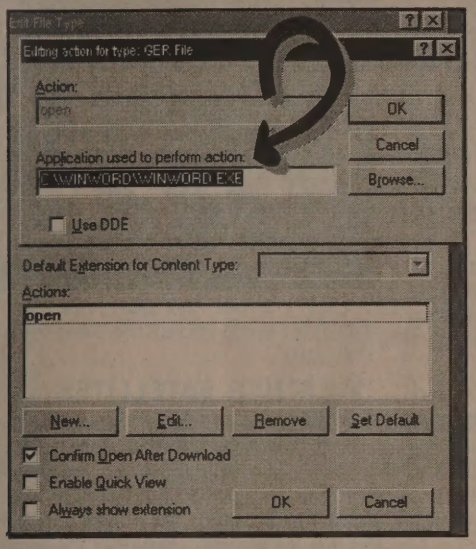


One can easily review the different associations by using the up and down arrows. Suppose you mistakenly opened the readme.ger file as a Word file. If you failed to uncheck the "Always uses this program to open the file", that's what it's going to do unless you force it to do otherwise. As you scroll down through the associations and extensions, watch for the .ger. When you find it, with the Word icon beside it, you'll see "GER File". Double click on "ger file" (the file you desire to alter) and it will bring up the Edit File Type window. At this point, you again see your file type with the icon. If for some



reason you desire to change the icon, you can do so here by clicking on Change Icon and pick one that suits your fancy. The more important matter is changing the file association. After making sure that you have chosen the desired action (usually Open), click on the Edit button toward the bottom of

the window and it will bring up the Editing action for the ".ger File". Keep in mind, I'm using .ger File as the example. You will see "Application used to perform action" highlighted which



shows the path to that particular program. At this point you browse to the particular .exe program you wish to use to associate or open your file. Click OK and you'll drop back to Edit file type window. Click on the Change Icon to ensure you have the correct or desired icon, click on Close and you're home free! The next time you come across a file whose extension is ".ger" it will use your "personally preferred" and hopefully correct program to open it.

There are many other specialized operations that one can configure within this series of windows. Of prime importance is to be able to change the file association so I'll save the specialized stuff for later.

For now, just become associated with your file associations.

Florida Contest Club (FCC) Formed

At the Melbourne Hamfest held in September 1997, many new members of the FCC were there for their first Hambest meeting. They assembled at Woody's Bargeque Restaurant where newsletters were passed out to attendees.

The FCC held a brief business meeting.

SKIP has received the new newsletter, edited by Fred Perkins, K4LQ. It's a fine, informative newsletter that is filled with information that would delight the contester. There are articles about contesting, local and national contest results, and a contest calendar for the upcoming three months.

If you are interested in more information about the Florida Contest Club, contact Fred Perkings, K4LQ, 3437 Lake Josephine Drive, Lake Placid FL 33852, Phone 941-382-4088. E-mail address: fperkins@ct.net

South Florida BBS Totals - Dec., 1997

Compiled by Bill Britton, KB4VOL

BBS	NTS	PERS	BUL	TOT MSGS	
AE4IG	153	332	4873	5358	
K0ZXF	0	278	5773	6061	
K4VJI	117	163	5819	6099	
KB4GBS	-NO REPORT-				
KB4VOL	OFF THE AIR - LIGHTNING DAMAGE				
KB4WUA	-NO REPORT-				
KC4YEK	-NO REPORT-				
KD4GR	-NO REPORT-				
KE2IX	-NO REPORT-				
KF4BPX	-NO REPORT-				
KF4OJ	0	46	3029	3079	
KO4KS	-NO REPORT-				
KP4EDL	0	318	5281	5599	
N4AWX	6	251	1587	1844	
N4HHP	-NO REPORT-				
N4XEO	16	571	6158	6745	
W4DPH	59	2077	9127	11263	GATEWAY
W4MIN	118	327	5476	5921	
W4MLB	-NO REPORT-				
W4MWP	-NO REPORT-				
W4OT	-NO REPORT-				
WA2LKI	-NO REPORT-				
WB2WPA	4	71	4540	4615	
WB4MOZ	-NO REPORT-				
WB4TEM	-NO REPORT-				
WD8IBY	-NO REPORT-				

NTS TOTAL: 473

Win some, lose some! Got a few reports this month from stations that had been missing, but lost a few others. C'mon folks, these reports are important!

Until I get the bbs back on the air (which seems to be taking forever!) please continue to sent the monthly reports to KB4VOL @ N4XEO -or-(if you have E-Mail) send them direct to kb4vol@gate.net I get them a lot quicker that way, and can acknowledge receipt. Thanks to Bill, N4XEO, for his continued help.

73... Bill KB4VOL, ARRL Packet Manager South Florida.

VISIT THE FL HAM WEB SITE! LOTS OF HAM INFO AND THE MONTHLY LISTS!

* **http://pages.prodigy.com/kb4vol** *

North Florida BBS report - Dec 1997.

Dave Sutherland / N4GMU

CALL	BULL	PERS	NTS	TOT
AA4RU	N/R			
K4GBB	1945	195	31	2171
KB4FEA	11175	66	0	11241
KE4INI	4829	319	60	5208
N4GMU	1998	280	15	2293
N4JTS	2127	129	11	2267
N8NEU	BBS taken off the air 12/31			
WB5THT	5626	659	0	6285
N0ZO	N/R			
W4WEB	N/R			
WB4NOD	N/R			
WX4J	107	32	103	242
KE4YEK	660	329	1	990

Total NTS traffic for NFL: 221 SEND REPORTS: N4GMU @ N4GMU.#NFL.FL.USA.NA n4gmu@totcon.com

Slow Scan Television and Weather Satellites

Fred Sharp, W8ASF

According to most of the wizards of Sunspot analysis.our bonanza of DX will have to be put off till the year 1999 or 2000. Although the sunspots are on the rise, theyre just not rising fast enough. One thing for sure, reception on the HF bands has no place to go but up. Every Day in Every Way.

A PRIMER FOR NEW COMPUTER SLOWSCANNERS

When I got started in SSTV in 1979 the science was just changing from P7 long persistance phosphor cathode ray tubes to digital. The first SSTV picture I saw was on the face of a CRT. When I entered the mode, it was digital and within 4 years there were a number of scam converters in use. I had a Robot 400 for a few years and finally an LM 9000 (Robot 1200 clone) While there are scan converters being sold and in use, SSTV transmission as an art has gone to computers. Why not? One can get started for no cost as most of the SSTV software is freeware and readily available. All one needs is a tranceiver, computer, a simple interface and software. You can be sending and receiving first class color pictures instantly. This brings me around to listing some of the DOS and Windows software programs. Bear in mind, a DOS program will run in windows, or should I say, a DOS program can be run from Windows. Don't think that programs classified or written as DOS programs cannot be run in Windows. They can.
WINDOWS SSTV PROGRAMS

About the most recent software for Windows 95 is W95SSTV Ver 1.10. Its full transmit and receive 32 bit software that features a serial port PTT and does all the modes. It has some graphics features too, like de-speckle, which is a word coined by the HIRES people and cleans any otherwise useless streaked picture for transmission.

Winpix Pro software runs in Windows 3.1 and 95 and is receive only.

WinSkan ver 1.02S also runs in both Windows platforms and uses your sound card.

DOS SSTV PROGRAMS

There are a number of DOS SSTV programs, all good and all available by download. They are:

JVFAX Latest freeware sends and receives Color SSTV, WEFAX and Satellite Fax. Also hi resolution Color Hamcolor Fax. Works with Hamcom (741 opamp) interface. Latest version is JVFAX71A.ZIP

MSCAN SSTV It's possible to setup another transmit screen while you are receiving a picture. Uses the Hamcom interface. Excellent program by Combitech of Holland.

FTV SSTV Has SSTV, RTTY and FAX. Uses computer sound card.

Vester SSTV Program written by Ben Vester. Good resolution. SSTV only

HiScan SSTV program for the Viewport board

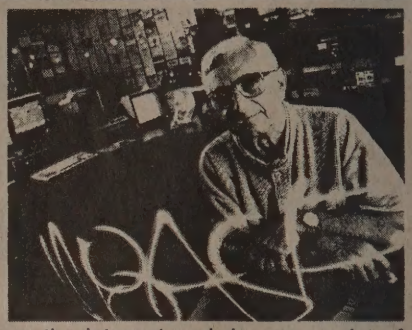
SSTVV96 SSTV uses the Hamcom interface

The MFJ1278 can be modified for SSTV

EZ-SSTV shareware version 3. Uses 741 opamp interface.

ATFAX v 5.21 by OZ1AT Shareware does SSTV and FAX

This is some assortment of free software. I remember my start in SSTV. There was nothing free about it. You bought a Robot 400 and that was about it. Modifications were made to the 400 by Sam Mormino to convert it to sending and receiving color, but frame sequentially only. You had to have interference free signals and had to send a frame of red, one of green and one of blue which you overlaid in memory and displayed as a color picture. When Robot came out with the 1200C, it didn't take long for someone to break the source code and voila! much computer software. I believe the only software I haven't reviewed as you is W95SSTV v 1.10. I have just downloaded it and am in the process of trying it out. As a SSTV ONLY program, it seems to have most of the bells and whistles built in, so in a future column you can expect to hear about it. By the way, most all this software can be downloaded at the KL7JS site at http://www.alaska.net/~buckholz. He has set up one of the best ham sites



on the internet and deserves a lot of credit for bring you all the sites for free software.

WEATHER SATELLITES

For those readers who are interested in weather satellite data, pictures and the like, the following list of sites (credits due to the RIG GROUP in Britain) should keep you busy for some time: Collections of Weather Data Links

http://cirrus.sprl.umich.edu/wxnet/

Weathernet is a large collection of North American links, images and data.

http://www.comet.net/weather/

North American weather links including marine and tropical data.

http://www.ugems.psu.edu/~owens/weather.html

Allentown weather center. Browser friendly

http://www.ugems.psu.edu/~klee/enforcer/wx-spot1.html

The Weather Spot, links to many weather pages, satellite, severe weather,etc

http://www.nxdc.com/weather

The Weathere Resource. Links to many weather pages, movies,etc.

http://www.met.reading.ac.uk/~brugge/index.html

Links to European weather sites

http://www.ozemail.com.au/~wbc/

Links to Australian Weather Sites

http://atmos.es.mq.edu.au/maciss/query.html

Searchable database of atmospheric science servers

Till next

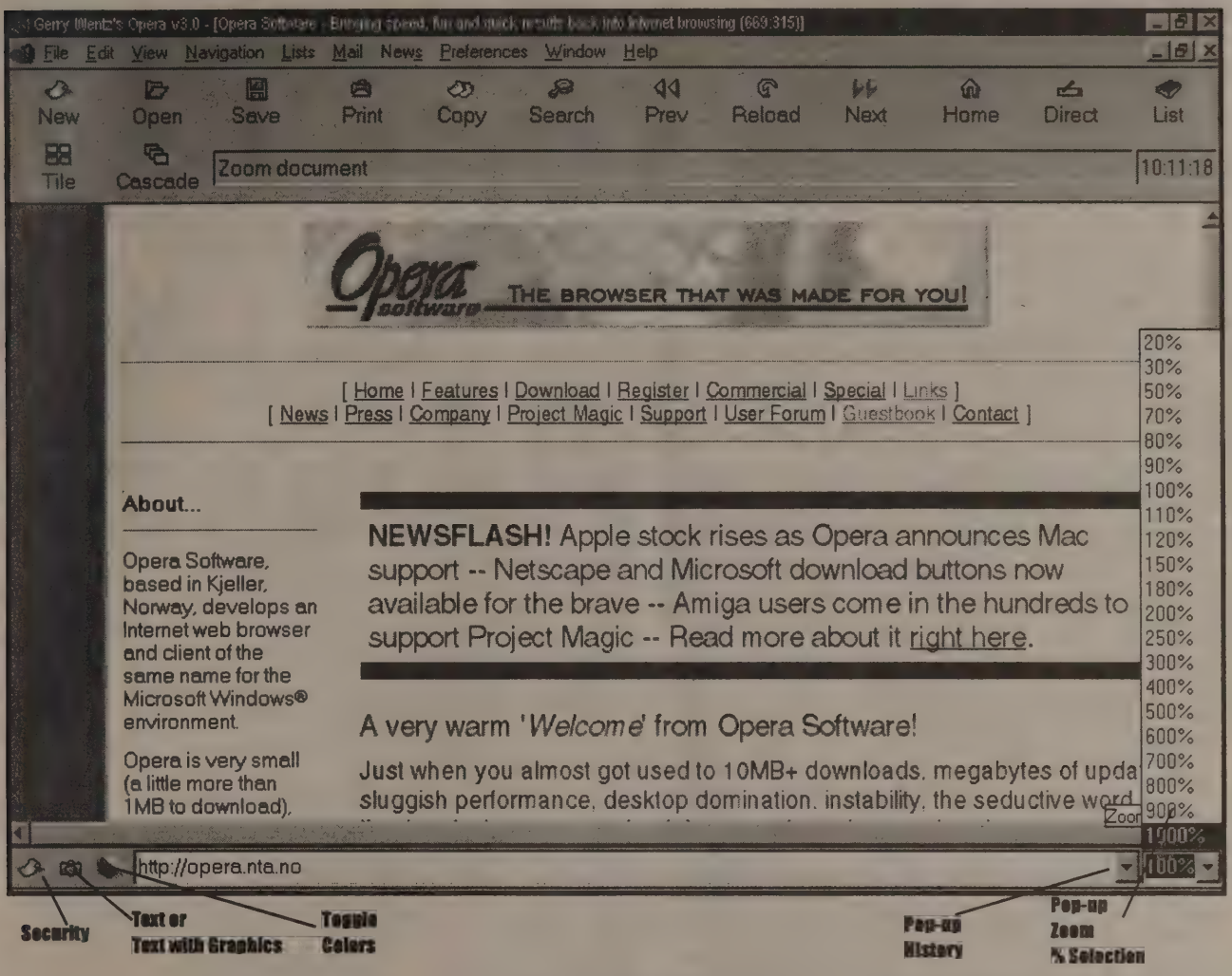
Fred Sharp W8ASF

STOP THE PRESSES

Just as we were going to press, *SKIP* noted that *C!NET*(one of the most highly respected Internet sites) picked OPERA as the editor's choice as the best alternative Internet browser. The magazine is proud to count as one of the first organizations in the United States to tout OPERA as a worthwhile alternative to the "Unibyters" Netscape and Internet Exployer. C!NET's capsule comments are as follows:

"It's fast, it's small, and it does almost everything a browser should do. Opera was several times faster than any other browser in our comparison, and it's nearly as fast as IE 4.01. It fits neatly in an extremely small footprint (you can run it on a 386SX with only 4MB of RAM), and the install program can live on a 1.4MB floppy with room to spare. Opera supports multiple languages and includes stripped-down email and a more-than-adequate newsreader—and the whole package is a reasonable $35."

Opera - A New Browser may challenge Big Boys



Are you fed up with it all?

First, there's Microsoft's Internet Browser foisted upon Windows users whether you want it or not. Then one hears conflicting stories about the dangers of uninstalling the browser and the need for a Ph.D. consultant to perform the operation. Many computer users resent the fact that they've become dependent on Microsoft through brute force techniques. Besides that, not everybody is enthralled with the MS browser.

Second, there's Netscape, struggling with the giant Microsoft for dominance in the browser market. They have designed a fine product that currently enjoys an ever decreasing lead over Internet Explorer. But if you've been with Netscape for any length of time, you know that every time you turned around, there was an updated version of Netscape and another plug-in that was a must-have. As soon as you were comfortable buying a subscription for a browser, you found another version released that didn't qualify as part of subscription. The myriad of plug-ins were skeleton versions that required registering to get. Besides that, not everybody is enthralled with the Netscape browser.

The joke used to be that Microsoft was awaiting new technology since most of their applications wouldn't fit on a CD. The current version weighs in at 16.9 Meg. The latest Netscape browser with all its appendages is 15.2 Meg. (That's when compressed)Nothing like sacrificing your computer for casual day of downloading. If one keeps up with the upgrading and adding of plug-ins, one is looking hard at 40 megabytes of space consumed by a browser. With all the refinements and interacting applications, they are capable of causing magnificent computer crashes. ***Do you really need all that to do what most simple folk do when browsing the Internet?***

Since I happen to have a peculiar interest in reading foreign newspapers and periodicals, I had read of another browser that was written from scratch by a developer in Kjeller, Norway. He was not under the spell of Netscape or Microsoft and didn't base the code on Mosiac. There was no attempt to adapt to anything, he just wanted to design an uncomplicated browser.

After again seeing it mentioned in PC World, I somewhat warily decided to take a look. The browser is named OPERA. I surfed to **http://opera.nta.no** and there it was - all 1 Megabyte, ready for downloading. ONE MEG! "Get Real," I said to myself. "Well 1 meg ain't all that bad." But, a browser that explodes to about 2 meg will be bare bones at best. Was I in for a surprise.

Quoting from their home page, and I will personally stand by the statement, "*Opera is an advanced web browser that is user-friendly, versatile and most importantly, fast.*" Additionally, Opera features full keyboard interface; multimedia support for a wide selection of audio, video and image formats (I have installed and operate RealAudio, Quicktime video, Crescendo, and VDO-Player). Although not all plug-ins work, it appears that most Netscape plug-ins

Continued on page 12

Opera software — The browser that was made for you!

Continued from page 11

will work with Opera. Much to my surprise, Netscape Smartmarks (bookmarks) was the first thing I tried and it worked with nary a hitch.

As most of my readers know, I am a privacy freak (No follow up remarks please) and it was unclear how vulnerable the browser was to cookies and to what extent the browser compiled a comprehensive road map of one's browsing activities. I knew if I extolled the virtues of Opera, the band of fellow privacy freaks who read the magazine would confront me with their questions. I spoke with Helmar Rudolph of Opera Software and I'll paraphrase his comments.

The browser supports the full 128 bit SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) protocol (versions 1 & 2) and that's pretty safe. Cookies are either on or off - one can not selectively reject cookies. That's no problem. I have been surfing the Internet for months, rejecting ALL cookies, and in less than 1/2 dozen cases did I need to allow cookies. That was more out of curiosity anyhow. When I did allow cookies, my NSCleanNT software intervened, gleefully accepting cookies and sending out bogus information when requested.

Opera flat out rejects cookies. I could not even detect the telltale screen flicker as I do with Netscape. I made several visits to some hard core cookie sites then scoured my computer for evidence of a breach. As yet, NONE.

Disabling of Cookies and Referrer Logging (track of activities) is somewhat confusing. Rather than phrasing it as "Disabling Cookies or Referrals" it shows as enabling. One should Uncheck enabling to disable. Sort of backwards.

Opera will maintain a history file or you can opt to turn off the damn unnecessary "court reporter".

Yes it keeps a cache, which is good while browsing but can leave incriminating evidence in your cache file. **One can select to empty the cache automatically after every session.** Mr. Rudolph was not sure if RAM cache remained but intends to check it out.

There is also an option that warns you if the information, such as a form, you are about to send is secure. The security status of all documents is indicated with an Icon on the browser showing No, Lo, Med or Hi (Security.

Opera can be navigated entirely with the keyboard. This makes it highly desirable for handicapped people.

Space will not permit me to point out all of the features of the browser. In time I intend to publish various articles on its operation, much like the popular Netscape primers I did several years ago. The overriding feature that completely dazzled me was its speed. I've grown accustomed to Netscape and never realized (until a weekend with Opera) that using Netscape was like driving a tank in the Daytona 500. There is a bulletin board on the Opera site and I must quote two of 100's of favorable comments that I read:

"***Opera flies like fecal matter from a shiny shovel.***" - Gareth Edwards, Leeds England

"***No more talking paperclips, no more captured desktops, no more 'bundled' rubbish...***" - John Gillies, Melbourne, Australia

I thought perhaps, I was overly enthused by the new "toy" and decided to run an unscientific scientific test. First, I cleared all cache from the Netscape and Opera browsers. There were no other applications running; just a blank stare from my desktop. I wanted to check the initial boot to home page then I took four arbitrary web sites and determined the times each site took to be fully loaded (Document Done). I did each test several times and cleared the cache each time. The load times were consistent. The following are the results:

	Op (sec)	Ncp (sec)
Boot to Home Page	4	22
www.china.com	27	45
www.digital.net/skip	4	11
www.telegraph.co.uk Read story subpage	31 11	56 11
206.86.148.162/ cover-page.htm Vietnam Radio	56	70

It appears my perceptions of speed were correct as the above statistics show. For someone like me who browses Internet out of necessity rather than choice, it became a less painful experience.

Additionally, the browser is generally user friendly after one gets used to some unfamiliar terminology. (Keep in mind, Europeans phrase things differently) Some of my greatest mishaps and puzzles were miraculously solved by taking time to read the excellent documentation. I thought my biggest problem was configuring Opera but in retrospect, it was because I was attempting to make a simple straight forward procedure complicated. In effect, it's essentially ready to go when you get it. The biggest difficulty, and it remains so, is getting the browser to associate plug-ins with Opera. BUT - one must keep in mind, the browser was not designed to accommodate Netscape or MS products but nevertheless it will, when properly coaxed.

A nice feature is the "Zoom Document" button on the browser. A click on the pop up window gives you the choice of zooming from 20-1000 percent. As one knows, some of the text on sites borders on invisible and the convenient ability to blow it up 200-400 percent in a flash is handy. Then you encounter some sites that insist on spreading their page half way off the edge of your monitor. Click on 70 or 80 percent and you have a full page view. No more fishing expeditions through the Netscape windows to look for a different size view, then waiting an interminable amount of time for it to load. Opera is almost instantaneous.

Opera has an excellent Hotlist (bookmarks in our terminology) that reflects the perspective of European influence. However, it is highly useful and well thought out. It turned me on to many new sites I had never seen.

The Hotlist has been designed to easily import Netscape bookmarks but I found it operates just fine with Netscape application SMARTMARKS. The hotlist comes initially integrated into the browser, attached to the left side. I soon relegated it to being subject to call via the Lists icon since it prevents full view of a web page, necessitating horizontal scrolling. Because of the ease and functionality of access, the hidden Hotlist operation is much more desirable.

The browser has the ability to toggle user colors of the web page or toggle loading of images. The toggling of colors is especially useful when one encounters pages where the text is buried in an overbearing colored frame or reversed out of a distracting color. A mouse click toggles off document colors making the information again readable. The other switch allows instant text or text with graphics views.

Opera makes no bones about it - Opera isn't offered for free! Although a trial version is basically the same as the registered version with some limitations, it is well worth the asking price of $35.00 to get the "full blown" browser. I have yet to find a compelling reason to use Netscape unless, I would want to access material using Java. I always run with Java disabled anyhow. Opera doesn't support Java.

I can heartily recommend that you visit **http:/opera.nta.no** and download this fine browser. Since I've been using Opera, the entire Opera directory takes only slightly over 2M of space. The lightning response and ease of operation is a delight. I'm looking into arrangements to make the browser available on the SKIP webpage. As you can see, I finally got fed up with downloading, upgrading, licensing, revising, crashing, waiting, and eating up space on my hard drive. Unless I encounter some serious problems with Opera in the future, I'm a new user. Netscape and its 30 something megabytes can reside on a zip disk until summoned.

Shareware Reviews

Ronnie Cohen, KF4GHG

EasyBook

Electronic books (Ebook) are useful tools for hams, computer enthusiasts, or anyone who wants a fast and inexpensive method for distributing ideas and information. There are Ham/Computer clubs that distribute monthly newsletters and other information as Ebooks. This saves paper, printing costs, and is easy to update and change. Individuals have used Ebooks to create manuals, catalogs and novels. Some people have shown entrepreneurship by creating Ebooks to sell.

One of the best shareware Ebook publishing software programs is EasyBook, by Interactive Educational Software. This easy to use program takes any text file(s) and converts it into fully customizable scrolling books, with printing options. Compiled books can have different screen sizes, colors and even VGA fonts. These Ebooks detect non VGA systems and default back to normal font. EasyBook's Ebooks run on any P.C. (DOS, Windows 3.1/95, OS/2) system and registered users can distributed their creations royalty free.

EasyBook creates an opening screen with a title block and a menu system for easy chapter access. The user can define the title information and the sequencing for each text section. In addition, the opening screen's layout (i.e. colors, designs) and location are defined by the user. Registered users receive a utility for creating opening screen graphics. However, any binary file editor can be used.

Compiled, Ebook's opening screen menu displays up to sixteen entries that are keyboard or mouse activated. The user decides how many entries their Ebook menu should display. Menus scroll up or down to provide access to different book chapters. After a chapter has been selected, it appears with scroll bar and menu.

There are three EasyBook chapters styles. Besides the normal scrollable text, Easy Book can create hypertext links. This feature is useful for training manuals or any document that needs to link words, concepts or ideas. Both of these chapter styles feature a drop down menu system for each section of text. Menu options include a search feature, setting bookmarks, printing or using external utilities. The third type of chapter is for creating multi media effects by displaying graphics and playing sounds.

Registered EasyBook users receive several gifts with their registered program. In addition to getting the legal right to use EasyBook you receive a Freeware screen editor for creating binary screens, a font editor to create VGA fonts, icon editor, screen grabber and a word game. In addition you receive a shareware version of InstallMax, a program for creating installation program for DOS and Windows.

For more information about EasyBook, or for a free disk catalog and coupon, please contact

Mom 'N' Pop's Software <ASP>
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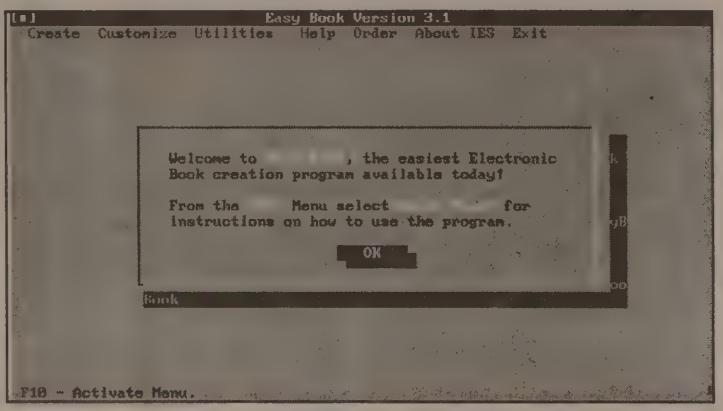
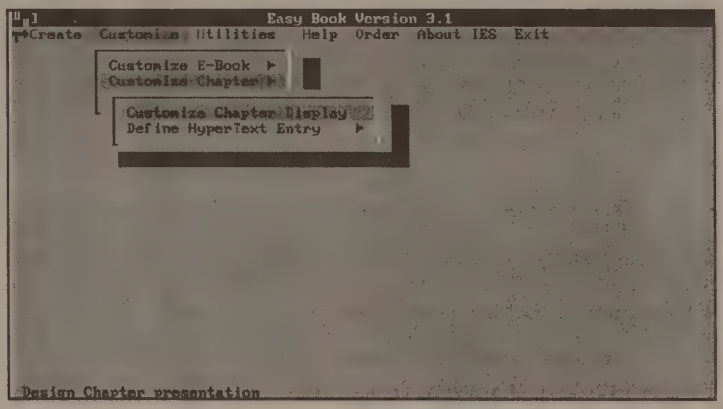
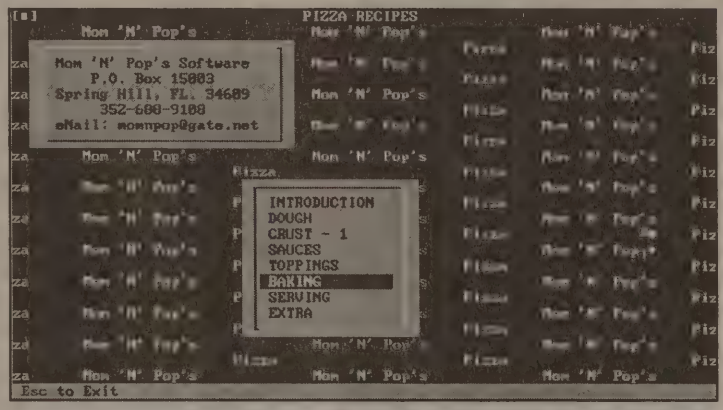
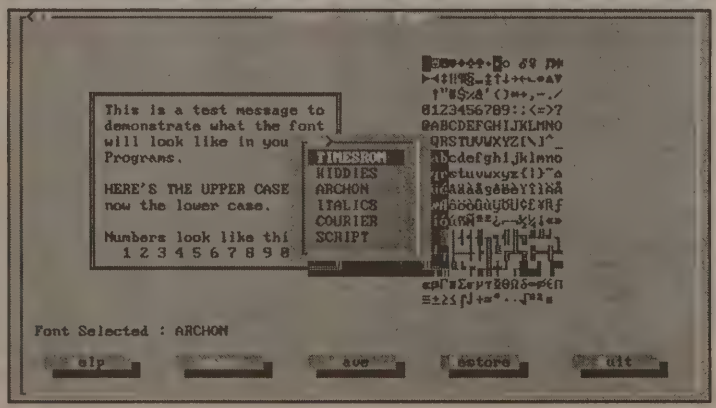
(352) 688-9108
email: momnpop@gate.net









Air Force MARS - Carl Houston, Jr. (AFF2P), Editor

1998 CONFERENCE... The next conference is scheduled for the regular time in August and as for now, is planned to be held in Louisville, KY. AFF2KY, Henry Taylor, reports that the works are in motion, and that he has appointed Charlie Senn, AFA2CS as conference coordinator. Good luck to these folks - it takes a lot of footwork and other things to even get off the ground with a conference planning, and I'm sure that we will have another good time in Louisville.

I recently received a newsletter from North Carolina, the "Tarheels USAF MARS News", put together by Phil Grebel, AFA2RX. He has volunteered his efforts to try to get a regular news mailing out. Good job, Phil. Anyone with newsworthy articles can get them to Phil at logicltd@.hci.net or fax at 704-437-1833.

PROTECTION FOR US... The "Volunteer Protection Act of 1997" also known as Public Law 105-19, became effective September 16, 1997. It was designed to provide Federal protection from "frivolous, arbitrary, or capricious" lawsuits filed against individuals affiliated with nonprofit organizations and government entities and acting in their volunteer capacities. In general, the new law will exempt a volunteer of a nonprofit organization or governmental entity from liability for harm caused by an act or omission of the volunteer on behalf of such organization or entity if: (1) the volunteer was acting within the scope of his or her responsibilities at the time; (2) the volunteer was properly licensed or otherwise authorized for the activities or practice in the State in which the harm occurred; (3) the harm was not caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed, and (4) the harm was not caused by the volunteer operating a motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other vehicle for which the State requires the operator or owner to possess an operator's license or maintain insurance.

This lets a lot of us who do Public Service work on a regular basis breathe a lot easier. We must train and maintain a high degree of job knowledge in order to stay within the guidelines set forth within the protection act, however. At least we now have a new tool to help us other than just our radio equipment...

MORE "THUNDER ROLLING" ... From the Chief, Harold Collins: "Initial results indicate that the recently concluded joint exercise "ROLLING THUNDER" was a resounding success. Participating MARS stations should be justifiably proud of the professionalism and realism that was brought to this exercise."

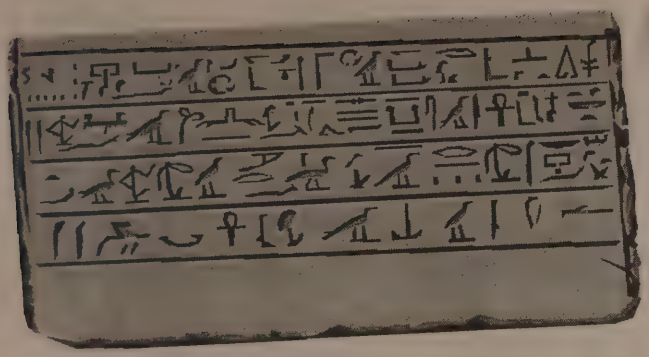
All of the MARS services that were involved in "Rolling Thunder '97" have critiqued the exercise recently, and overall, each has realized and isolated the good and not-so-good aspects of the operation. I haven't read all of the critiques, but the exercise has been deemed by the administration of each service as having been a very good training tool. We have counted the total messages sent, the information contained in them, and the speed and reliability of the message networks. All were very good.

There must be, however, an additional line of thought in future scenarios such as RT 97. There is another side of the coin - one we all have trained in for many years. We have been thinking recently that our mission has changed dramatically from the decades-old Health and Welfare message handling to assisting with emergency coordination for FEMA and other state and local entities. We have shown just in the last couple of months that we can prepare and send disaster messages through the assigned channels from the scene of a catastrophe, but it must be realized that there will be much two-way traffic during these times. In fact, there may be more incoming traffic to the affected area than outgoing.

Think of it this way: a very bad earthquake or other devastating occurence happens in Missouri. The news is telecast at noon countrywide, and Aunt Helen in North Carolina realizes that nephew Homer and family are in the affected area. Worried, she calls a little later. The phone call doesn't go through due to service outage or jammed circuits. She cannot get through, and desperation sets in. After many hours of repeated attempts, she remembers to try the Red Cross, Salvation Army, or other local agencies. She gets a lucky break when reaching the local Red Cross chapter, whose commander is a ham. He gets the information from her, and either on the MARS or amateur bands, gets a H&W message into the area inquiring about her family.

Back in Missouri, the radio traffic is still getting out, thanks to hams and MARS stations. Now another request is being made - find out about the condition of the residents in the surrounding area and get a report back to North Carolina and other places, quickly. This is a big priority, too. Affected people's families must be kept advised of their situation, either good or bad. Coordination must be established with several agencies to handle the bad news coming out of an area, and planning cannot start too soon for these types of reports.

The Arnold AFB Special Event Station awards were recently distributed. Thanks again to all who made this a success.



PM Tony Blair's Highly Secret Encryption Computer "Missing"

LONDON, ENGLAND, 1998 JAN 16 (NB) — By Steve Gold, Newsbytes. It what could turn out to be one of the most embarrassing government admissions of the last few years, the British government has admitted today that a customized computer encryption computer has "gone missing" from the Cabinet Office next door to 10 Downing Street, normally the Prime Minster's residence, in London.

According to the government press office, the "spy computer system" was used for sending highly encrypted messages to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the MI5/MI6 security services. Newsbytes understands that the computer, the size of a VCR, operates over wireline and wireless communications links.

Newsbytes notes that the Cabinet Office is normally surrounded by police and even access to Downing Street itself is controlled by uniformed officers.

According to Scotland Yard, Charing Cross police station is "investigating an allegation of theft from a government building in central London." No other details about the theft, including the date of when the unit disappeared, have been released.

Although the Cabinet Office claims that there are no security problems associated with the apparent theft of the unit, Newsbytes notes that the computer almost certainly uses the top secret Rambutan encryption system, which is claimed to be absolutely hacker-proof.

The Rambutan encryption system is normally chip-based and has a highly complex encryption algorithm developed by Cheltenham-based CESG, part of the Zergo group, to protect files and data communications.

The encryption system operates at speeds of up to 64,000 bits per second and is suitable for ISDN (integrated service digital network) and analog modem communication, as well as analog and digital radio links.

As you can see, there is much more planning and coordination needed in preparing for the ultimate situation such as we may face at any time. Remember that you will handle H&W messages in any situation where people's lives have been disrupted by unforseen disasters. It all comes about by the public's concern for their loved ones, and that will never change.

PREPARATION (H)ELPS... One of the most emergency-prepared hams in this decade has to be Abdul Jabbar Marafi, 9K2DZ, in Kuwait City, Kuwait. When the Iraqi forces seized the country, they came to Abdul's home, with it's noticably huge radio tower, to confiscate his equipment. They left with their seized communications gear, not knowing that his station was still intact, stashed in a basement. He had substituted some old, broken, unusable boat-anchor gear in it's place on his shack desk. For the next six months he was able to secretly use his hidden radio set and get messages out to the world about the conditions in KC. He sometimes left goodies (a sack of flour or other condiments) at his front door as bribes to soldiers, and that may have saved him from a thorough inspection of his property. Short messages at irregular daily intervals kept the Iraqis from detecting and capturing his station. Very good planning, wouldn't you say?

AIM HIGH!

DISCLAIMER: This is not an official United States Air Force release, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Air Force or the MARS.

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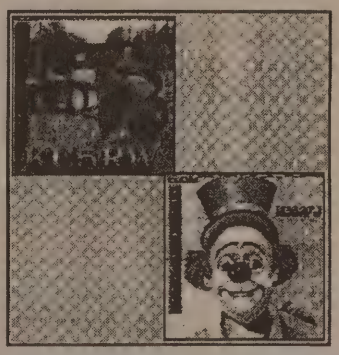

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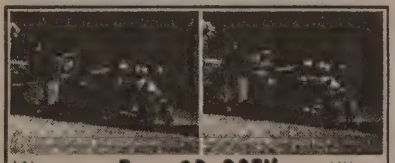

left image — right image

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Internet Update

Law Guru Keeps Legal Information Free!

The goal of the Law Guru BBS is try to help people find free answers to some of their legal questions. There are two ways you can try to find answers to legal questions. You can run a search through the BBS database of thousands of previously asked questions or, if you can't find what you are looking for, submit a question to the site and have it posted to our Lawguru.com BBS, so that some of the attorneys on the network may attempt to answer it. World Wide Web: **http://www.lawguru.com/cgi/bbs/lawguru.cgi**

Latest From The Moon

Cast your mind back a week-or-so ago and you might remember the launch of Lunar Prospector, a NASA mission to carry out more research about the moon. The satellite went into orbit about the Moon on 11 January and is now in its preliminary 100 km altitude mapping orbit. You can find out more about the mission, its goals, and current status, at the two Web sites below. World Wide Web: **http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/lunarprosp.html World Wide Web: http://lunar.arc.nasa.gov**

FEC Disclosure Reports

The Federal Election Committee is now putting images of the actual financial reports filed by campaigns and committees up on the Web. Now you can view the reports as they were originally submitted, something that used to require a trip to your state elections office or the FEC in Washington. You can also see miscellaneous correspondence between the FEC and committees in cases where there are questions about information included in reports or where committees want to clarify what they have reported. The system is beginning with all reports covering 1997 and, as the backlog clears, they intend to post reports daily, as they are received. World Wide Web: **http://www.fec.gov/finance/images.htm**

CNNfn Investment Tracker

The Web site of CNNfn, the financial news channel from CNN, has launched a new investment tracker tool that enables users to get up-to-the-minute information on their personal investment portfolios. The Java application runs on a user's computer and, once a portfolio has been selected, silently works, bringing the most up to date information to the desktop. World Wide Web: **http://cnnfn.com/tracker**

EXPO Online

EXPO is an great online exhibition that spans the world and, with the aid of many people, makes interesting exhibitions available to the general public. Current exhibits include the Vatican Exhibit, "Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture," the Soviet Archive Exhibit, the first public display of the hitherto highly secret internal record of Soviet Communist rule, the 1942 Exhibit, "An Ongoing Voyage," The Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit, "Scrolls from the Dead Sea: The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Scholarship," the Paleontology Exhibit, "An Exhibition of Fossil Life," the Spalato Exhibit, "The Palace of Diocletian at Split." World Wide Web: **http://sunsite.unc.edu/expo/ticket_office.html**

Twisted Underground

This is one you'll either love or hate! Twisted Underground is a weekly electronic magazine of editorials with an attitude. It describes itself as a "free e-zine dedicated to bringing fresh commentary without all the fluff. We don't report the news, we just beat on it until it stops moving." World Wide Web: **http://pureprofit.simplenet.com/elsucko/**

Learn The Basics Of The Internet

The American Library Association's ICONnect service has a useful Internet tutorial, "Learn to Use the Internet as a Curriculum Resource." The course covers the basic tools for using the Internet, including e-mail, listservs, gopher, telnet, WWW, ftp and newsgroups and, while designed for teachers, is useful for anyone that wants some basic Internet tuition. World Wide Web: **http://www.ala.org/ICONN/onlineco.html**

Visit Russia Online

Three servers in Russia provide lots to read about and might even help you make a decision on your summer vacation destination this year! The first is the official site of the Russian National Tourist Office and will help you explore Moscow. The St. Petersburg site offers all you need to know about Russia's "northern capital" and one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Finally, take a trip through the Russian wilderness and back country on the last site, complete with images and information. World Wide Web: http://www.interknowledge.com/russia/moscow01.htm World Wide Web: http://www.spb.su World Wide Web: **http://www.glasnet.ru/glasweb/asebrant/test3.html**

One Hundred Years Of Science

Nylon stockings, Einstein's Theory of Relativity, Polio vaccine, Pulsars, Plate tectonics, the workings of the human brain. These are just a few of the discoveries to explore on the Science Odyssey Web site, the companion to the five-part, ten-hour television series broadcasting on PBS January 11 through 15, 1998. Web surfers can journey through 100 years of discovery, encountering the people, breakthroughs, and social forces that have made this the most dynamic century in the history of science and technology. World Wide Web: **http://www.pbs.org/aso**

Jewish Heritage Online Magazine

This online magazine, updated weekly, includes many articles about Jewish culture and heritage. Visitors can currently discover how the Jewish calendar was calculated, information about Jewish first names, a weekly lesson, tales and legends from the past and more. World Wide Web: **http://www.jhom.com**

Information From The Investigation Of TWA Flight 800

The full contents of thousands of pages of documents presented at the recent public hearings into the crash of TWA flight 800 are available online. The NTSB Web site includes many megabytes of data so be prepared for a long download. World Wide Web: **http://www.ntsb.gov/Events/twa800/exhibit.htm**

Talking The Olympics Into The Classroom

Students from around the world can experience the thrill of the 1998 Olympic Winter Games in their classrooms with the U.S. Olympic PBS Cyber School Powered by IBM, a comprehensive Web site that helps students, parents and teachers combine the Olympic Games with interactive, cross-curricular, cross-cultural learning adventures. Built around major sports, the site offers beginning, intermediate and advanced problem-solving exercises for middle school students working independently or in groups, both at school and at home. World Wide Web: **http://www.ibm.pbscyberschool.org**

Reliving The Golden Days Of Radio

Radio Days takes listeners back to a time when AM radio meant more than shock jocks and obnoxious talk radio DJs. The timeline section takes you back to events that happened on the same date in the past, the radio news section includes information on the people who brought you the news, the drama section has lots on your old favorites and the entire site includes clips of famous broadcasts, for users to download and listen to. World Wide Web: **http://www.otr.com**

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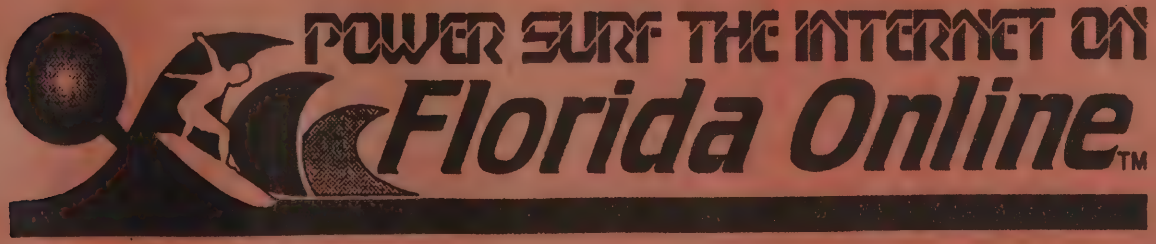

QCWA News - Frank Obenauf (W2IAJ), Editor

1997 Phil Stern Award

This year's recipient of the Phil Stern award is well known to all Pelican members. He is a charter member and former president of Pelican Chapter. First licensed in 1933 while still a teenager, he has worked in commercial broadcasting as well as maintaining an active participation in amateur radio.

When he became eligible, he joined QCWA and has been an active member ever since. He served as Activities Manager from 1978 to 1982 and served 14 years as National Treasurer.

He has participated in many phases of amateur radio, numerous clubs, QCWA chapters, hamfests, field days and for the past 16 years, has manned the QCWA booth at the Miami Hamboree, and Tampa Hamfests.

He is a member of about 15 chapters of QCWA here in Florida and in New England and was instrumental in organizing the Yankee Chapter, serving as its president.

It would be difficult to find another amateur who has devoted as much time and energy to our hobby.

Congratulations to you, Wes Randles, W4COW.

Gator Chapter #32. The meeting was attended by 32 members and guests. The meeting was opened on a somber note that three of our members had become silent keys; Mae Burke W3CUL, Phil Winters K8THT and Bill Cannon W9KYP. A donation of $25.O0, for the scholarship fund, will be sent to QCWA Headquarters in memory of each deceased member.

The program this month was a brief talk by Reverend Ron Dickman, Executive Director of The Religious Community Services. Reverend Dickman told us that 80 congregations in upper Pinellas County support projects to meet basic human needs. Founded in 1987 the projects are; GRACE HOUSE, provides shelters for homeless families for up to two months. FOOD PANTRY, emergency food is supplied to families. THE STEPPING STONE, provides low-cost housing to single parent families. THE HAVEN, provides for victims of domestic violence and The FURNITURE WAREHOUSE, collects, refurbishes and supplies home furnishings to the various housing units.

Traditionally at our December meeting we take a collection which is matched by our treasury. Treasurer Bill Carpenter WA2KFH presented Reverend Dickman with a check for $100.00. Treasurer Bill reported a balance of $954.07 on hand and also mentioned that DUES ARE DUE! If you find an envelope included with this NEWSLETTER, you need to send a check to Bill. ($4.00 will suffice) The Chapter financial report will be in the January Newsletter.

A bonus program was provided by Harry Bloechel K4WP. Harry was calling CQ on his radio on December 7, 1941 unaware of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Another operator came back and asked if he had heard the news. Harry answered in the negative, but tuned to the broadcast band and learned that we would soon be at war. A day later Harry received instructions from the FCC to immediately shut down his station. Harry has preserved the original letter which he proudly showed to all.

We have a new member of the Gator Family, Bob Kinney W4BB has taken a BRIDE! Bob and Marcella have dated for some time, even to Chapter meetings. We wish them many years of happy marriage.

Don Bice W4PCO reported that 78 members and guests enjoyed the Pelican Chapter Picnic on November 19. Bill Bell K4AVH reported that members of Sun City, Pelican and Gator Chapters manned the QCWA booth at the Tampa Hamfest. A number of prospective members were interviewed and applications were handed out.

The Chapter meeting is held the first Saturday of every month at Stacey's, Buffet 1451 Missouri Avenue in the Midway Shopping Plaza, Clearwatar. Lunch starts at 11:00 with the meeting at noon. See you there? Bart Bridge W2ZYQ Secretary

The Pelican Chapter #128 held their regular business and annual meeting at Stacey's Buffet, in the Tyrone Gardens Shopping Center in St. Petersburg. Self introductions were made, by all 25 members and guest in attendance. At the request Of the management of the restaurant, the Pelicans were reminded not to carry out food by Secretary; J. Strom, K9BSL.

The Program for this meeting was presented by George Sallet, K4DSB. George presented his story of Pearl Harbor. George was on the U.S.S. Bagley DD-386. George's presentation was illustrated with maps, and pictures of Pearl Harbor and the Bagley. George at that time was 18 year old Seaman First Class, radio operator, and his story kept all the Pelicans interested in the events of that day.

A supply of Metric Rulers had been supplied by W1PXL Art Rose. These rulers were very well accepted and appreciated by the Pelican members, in fact several members ask for a second one.

Don W4PCO advised that the Pelican "Big Brown Bird" Picnic made a profit Of $27.08 after all bills were paid. Don reports that there were 71 tickets sold for the Picnic, with two refunds be issued to Phil & Eloise Winters K8THT. It was noted that Phil Winters K8THT was now a silent key, having entered the hospital on 18 November, and passing to the "Big DX List in the Sky" on December 5th. Don further reported that the Pelicans have $1,318.83 in the bank, with all bills paid, and that Chapter dues is coming in very well at this time. Don, W4PCO, also reported that K9MOR is in Chicago, and is recuperating slowly from his fall and broken hip. Jay, K9BSL, reported that Charles Campbell, W9UEM, passed his 90th Birthday on December 7th.

Frank Yates, 1(K2DZS was nominated to join the Pelican Chapter, a second was obtained and the Pelicans voted that Frank should join the Chapter. Franks Lady is Claire, and they were welcomed to our Chapter.

1998 Officers for the Pelican Chapter were nominated as follows: President Ken Johnson WA4TOP, Vice President Marshall Ellis, WAOFRP , Secretary J. Frederick Strom K9BSL ,Treasurer Don BiceW4PCO, 5 Year Director Buddy Morgan WB4OMG, Ex-

Continued on page 20

REMINDER:

Please consider checking into the QCWA national nets. The CW net is on Wednesday at 1000ET on 7035. The SSB net is on Sunday at 1500ET on 14,347.

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Florida Traffic Nets

Southeast Florida Traffic Net (SEFTN). Al, NT4AL, was hospitalized with a bit of cardiac trouble, but is out of the hospital and says he feels fine. Devoted to duty, Al managed to check into the net a few times from his hospital room.

The tourist season, coupled with the December holidays brought an increase in traffic and station activity. Yet, it is surprising how most of the traffic handled by the net is brought by a relatively small group of operators. While everyone is entitled to a few weeks or even months to get acquainted and accustomed, there is no reason why just about everybody can't bring traffic to the net once in a while. In addition to holiday greetings, there are birthdays and anniversaries, not to mention weddings, graduations, Bar Mitzvahs, First Communions, and releases on parole. Everybody knows someone with a birthday; why not send a radiogram the next time it comes around?

Don't be reluctant to bring traffic to SEFTN, even if you are not exactly sure how to put it into NTS format. There is always someone on the net that can help with the format. You might begin by copying the messages sent by Bob, KC4ZHF, each night. He sends a question from the General Class license pool, and the answer to the previous night's question. Copy the message down as though it were being sent to you personally, and then see if you can answer the question in the same NTS format. We are more interested in getting the format right, but finding the correct answer to the questions can't hurt any ham. But don't forget that traffic handling is more than answering questions from the pool — send a message to somebody — or, better yet, send one for a neighbor.

December was the 122nd month with over 1,000 stations participating in the evening station. KF4QJQ, Larry, checked in as number 1000 on December 29th; Rick, KF4IDG was net control. Frank, PZ1BK; Jim, WA4CSQ; John, KD4HGU; Chick, W4IHC; Willie, KC4JNM; Charles, WB4PAM; Tom, N0UJK; and Ford, KB4WBY, had perfect attendance at the evening sessions during December.

Don't forget KB4WBY's, electronic SEFTN newsletter at <http://www.geocities.com/researchtriangle/7146>. The newsletter contains some very useful information about the activities of other Florida nets, and VEC testing sessions.

SEFTN meets daily at 1130 and 1800 local time on 146.19/79 Mhz, the Motorola Amateur Radio Club repeater. The alternate frequency is 146.31/91, the Broward Amateur Radio Club repeater. Both sessions send representatives to the Section level NTS nets. New members are always welcome, so please join us. No experience in traffic handling is necessary, and all properly licensed Hams are welcome.

December SEFTN Statistics

62 Sessions

(Total/Average)

Session	Stations	Messages	Minutes
EARLY	433/13.9	87/2.8	478/15.4
LATE	1091/35.2	297/9.6	1772/57.2
TOTALS	1523/49.1	384/12.4	2250/72.6

73, Charles, WB4PAM

Charles T. Brusca p041732b@pb.seflin.org

News Flash

The Tamarac board amended their antenna ordinance that did not address the needs of ham radio towers but only cellular. Unless subject to deed restrictions, hams are excluded from antenna restrictions. Antenna restrictions would have been imposed on amateur radio towers but not for the intervention of Rich Bernstein of Tamarac. - Thanx Rich Bernstein, KA2YZM

Southwest Florida Traffic Net. The holidays are over and we all survived. I hope everyone got all they wanted for Christmas and I hope that everyone will enjoy a year of good health and happiness.

We start a new year and I hope a new trend with more people getting involved with traffic and the net.

It is nice to hear our winter visitors back on the air again, now if we can influence them a little into sending traffic back up north or wherever they are from it will be nice. I can remember when Lee County was rated as one of the top traffic handling areas in the state. Wouldn't it be nice to get back to that status again. Let's push for it this year.

Thanks again to all who worked so hard in 1998, I appreciate it and I am sure the club does also. Listen for more hints and helps from Blaine this year. If you know anyone that would like to help just let me know. 73 & 88 to all. Earl, K4FQU.

TOP TWENTY TRAFFICERS - AUGUST, 1997

by AA4HT and WX4H

	Station	Total		Station	Total
1	WX4H	2720	11	KB4WBY	321
2	W3VR	2523	12	WB2FGL	316
3	WA9VND	1342	13	WV5Z	276
4	K4SCL	1053	14	WD4IIO	262
5	KE4DNO	846	15	W4DL	258
6	AB4XK	739	16	KD4HGU	213
7	NR2F	706	17	AA4HT	199
8	W7AMM	638	18	AD4BL	198
9	KA2YZM	342	19	N0ZO	198
10	KC4ZHF	323	20	KA4FZI	196

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Knights of the Kilocycle - Don Browne (KO4YM), Editor

Knights enter 69th year

The Knights of the Kilocycle, amateur radio's oldest net, was organized on Christmas Day, 1929, and is now in it's 69th year of operation. The Knights meet every Sunday morning at 7:30 on 3910 Kilocycles. Since 1929 there have been 548 permanent memberships awarded to amateur operators. The Knights always welcomes new members. A membership certificate is earned after five consecutive weekly check-ins to the net.

And here goes the Knightly News: K4SMD, Fred has been busy working on his antennas. Fred reports he's changing out a balun. Fred has been a regular on the net for quite a few months. Doc, WA0FRP has been in the hospital and all wish him a speedy recovery. Andy Clark, W4IYT of Miami Springs had a bladder tumor removed but didn't miss a beat checking in on the net during the recovery period.

Charlie, W1PB of Zephyrhills reminds all that the "Phinney Fest" hamfest is again to be held at the Lions Club at 5827 Dean Dairy Rd. in Zephyrhills on March 1.

Wendy, W1UCL of Lutz has been out picking oranges and grapefruit from his backyard grove, while Doug N4SLS and Marion KC4MFT have been doing likewise, all enjoying their daily dose of nature's natural vitamin C.

The Knights had a pleasant visit from John, K4ANJ of Salt Springs who had not checked in for some time. Good to hear from you again, John.

Stan W4JKK, of Sebastian, has postponed his regular outings on his sailboat on the lake behind his house due to weather the last several weeks, but should be gliding over the water and sticking his fishing pole in the water anytime now.

Bob, W4KOG of North Palm, our master oscillator, received a Zenith Oceanic receiver from his son as a gift recently and has been busy checking out the innards to make it workable. The sun spot cycle and the sun activity is still having its ups and downs, hovering around the 100 mark. We should see the sunspots making for improved propagation over the next five or six years. The ten meter band has seen more activity recently than for many years, while all other bands are seeing improvment as well.

For those who have computers and internet access, please check out my web site at: http://members.aol.com/browne. The amateur radio pages there include Florida and Southwest Florida ham info, Florida repeater listings, listings of all area hams in Hendry, Glades, and west Lee county, online call books, and the latest Knights of the Kilocycle news as well as two QCWA chapter newsletter briefs. Also check out the ham radio web links mentioned in articles for the Cyberham section of Florida Skip, and the national online yellow pages and white phonebook links. There's even a chat room for those who want to do some online talk.

The Knights encourage new check-ins each Sunday morning to ham radio's oldest net. Please join us each Sunday at 7:30 AM, 3910 Kilocycles and let us know what's been happening in your area. We welcome all hams from anyone that can hear us. Invite your friends to listen and call in Sunday morning. See you all on Sunday morning.

Continued from page 18

pires 2002 4 Year Director Alan Pickering, KJ9N Expires 2001 3 Year Director Wesley Randles, W4COW Expires 2000 2 Year Director Jarvie Mullins WA4GJH Expires 1999 1 Year Director Ralph Luedke K9MOR Expires 1998 The nominated officers were elected unanimously and the Secretary cast a single ballot for their election. - J. Frederick Strom, K9BSL Secretary

Hernando Chapter #148. The "Welcome Back Snowbird" picnic was held on Wednesday November 5th. There were 18 members and guests present. The weather was fine, the food delicious and the company great. It was good to see so many of our friends after so many months.

Two of our members have become silent keys; Joseph Marsh N1JMS and Phil Partee W4ABI.

The November meeting was held at Pier 688 on the 19th and was attended by 28 members and guests. The president appointed Win K1BUM, Frank W1YTB and Jordy WB2IMO as the nominating committee to present a slate of officers at the December meeting for the annual election in January.

Frank W1YTB will be teaching a class for those preparing for the General Class license examination. If interested, Call him at (352) 489-4408.

Edison Chapter #196. Happy holidays!The December meeting was a very interesting occasion. First of all we changed locations so everything was new to us. We met at the Steak and Ale on US 41 in Fort Myers at 1130 hours. The brunch was attended by 16 members and 6 guests. After a bit of confusion, we moved to a bigger room with more seating capacity. I did not expect such a large turnout. The food was very good, in my opinion, but the service staff was not prepared to handle so many orders at one time so there was a little wait that may have ruffled some feathers. Nonetheless, everyone seemed to enjoy the new location and menu. If at all possible, seating arrangement will be different next month so we will have a better chance to talk to more people around us, perhaps row seating will help. As for now, we will be returning there the 2nd Tuesday of the month, every month, until further notice. I have canceled our reservations at Perkins in January so do not expect to see us there.

Our chapter has members from a variety of places, not all from southwest Florida. For example Ken Jamrogowicz, WB2PSD, is from NJ and he is working in Surrey, England for Esso Corp. Ken can be found on 10, 12, and 17 meters using the call G0VSN. He has been receiving our newsletters for a long time and enjoys them very much. I hope that some of our members will have an opportunity to work Ken over the holiday season, he would be thrilled to chat with someone from chapter # 196.

Another member who cannot always attend our functions is Jeff Beals, WB2OUK. Jeff works for the State Forestry Division and travels from the east coast to this area from time to time. He wants to move back to this area soon. You will hear Jeff using a new call, he is WA4AW now.

Let's not forget the Ft. Myers Amateur Radio Club hamfest at Shady Oaks Community Center on January 3rd and 4~,l998. There will be a table set up for our chapter that will be operated by Walt, W4IGE, and Ed, W3YMB. Please plan to visit our display that will have many items of interest for sure. Just look for our banner! If you need any more information you can contact Harry Arnold, K9ALX, at 941482-3113. Harry is in charge of table reservations for the FMARC. Colleen Sammons, KQ4TR, is also a contact person for FMARC and she can be reached at 941-936-1431. There will be a talk-in on 147.345 MHz.

Once again thanks for the donations to our treasury and for the great support of everyone on the air who keeps our amateur community informed.Tad Burik, WA8PXL, President

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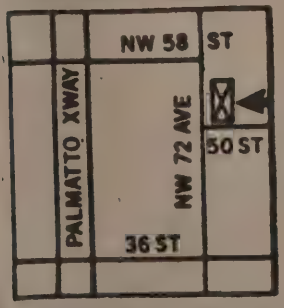

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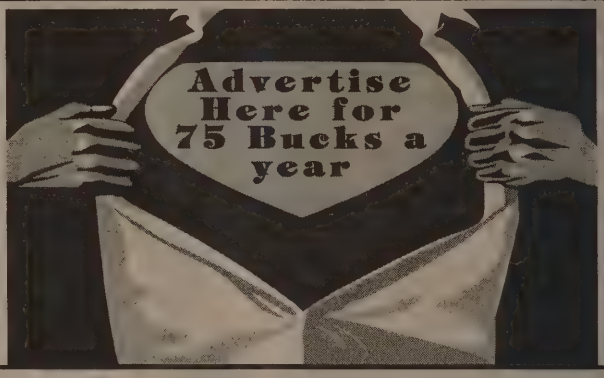

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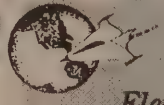

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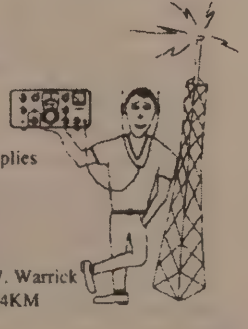

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Army MARS - Lorraine S. Matthew (AAA9PR), Editor

At the beginning of any activity or commitment, a philosophy should be in place or in mind as a guiding light. The beginning of a new year is no exception. Army MARS moves into 1998 with many fine expressions of its guiding philosophies. It is my intention to gather them here and to set the tone of the year to come.

Toward the end of October last year, Chief Army MARS Robert Sutton began a codification of the traits of an Army MARS member. This statement has not yet reached its final form; however, it is inclusive enough to form the basis of a fine volunteer Army MARS member.

Chief Sutton wrote:

"ARMY MARS CODE: Many of you will recall that the original 'Amateur's Code' was written by Mr. Paul M. Segal, W9EEA in 1928. It has been suggested by our members that Army MARS should also have code. Tonight I present the following modification based on the 'Amateur's Code' as a first draft. It is intended to inspire our members to improve upon it by obtaining suggestions from the membership.

An Army MARS member is:

- CONSIDERATE....never knowingly operates in such a way as to lessen the gratification of others who voluntarily devote their precious time and talents to the MARS program.

- LOYAL....offers loyalty, encouragement and support to all members as a team effort through which MARS is represented in a positive manner to those we support and the general public.

- PROGRESSIVE....with knowledge of new technology, a well-built and efficient station and operation above reproach.

- FRIENDLY....slow and patient, participating whenever possible; friendly advice and counsel to new members; kindly assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the hallmarks of the MARS spirit.

- BALANCED....radio communication is an additional activity, never interfering with the duties owed to family, job, or community.

- PATRIOTIC....station and talent always available to serve the community, state and country.

These characteristics of MARS members have most recently carried Army MARS successfully through its largest and most complex emergency communications exercise in its history. Rolling Thunder 97 concluded on 7 December 1997. Not all of the reports from the field are available at this writing, but, overall, the exercise was another notable success for Army MARS and the other MARS services and other federal agencies who chose to participate.

The Rolling Thunder 97 scenario centered around a 6.8 magnitude earthquake with its epicenter located at Marked Tree, AK. The magnitude was such that thousands of people were killed, higher thousands were injured and more that 25,000 people were displaced. Destruction was widespread, transportation was totally disrupted as was communications of all types. The MARS members in the affected areas were to operate under these constraints. Only VHF/HF radio was available with emergency power. Outside the area, a continuous increase in communications capabilities were allowed. Thus Army MARS uses a blend of all types of communications very effectively. Additionally, a second earthquake occurred 20 miles southwest of Las Vegas. This accommodated the SHARES exercise which had that as its scenario. This was, indeed, a nationwide exercise for all the MARS services, several federal agencies, and civilian agencies on local levels in several locations. This full cooperation is one of the continuing goals for Army MARS during 1998 and beyond.

Chief Army MARS, Robert Sutton, stated in his Command Net notes, "Initial observations and reports validate that much was learned. On the other side of the coin, all has not been perfect. There were a couple of situations that needed real-time corrections and some other areas that need to be addressed...There are more improvements that need to be made in a number of areas. But that's expected and, frankly, desired, as a PERFECTLY EXECUTED EXERCISE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A FAILURE." (Emphasis added by this writer)

During this exercise, several new operational techniques were required and used for the first time. The new region nets were one of these and proved most helpful in several cases. The propagation was such that information and message traffic could not be passed on Region 4 net. Region 7 operators were aware of this need for relay and monitored their frequency as well as Region 4's frequency. Thus the nationwide spirit of the exercise allowed the information and the messages to be relayed successfully.

Army MARS continues to use radio as its basic form of communications with good reason. Officials in the Kobi, Japan earthquake disregarded radio completely in their emergency relief plans since cellular telephones were not dependent upon landlines and would be usable with or without utilities and phone lines remaining intact. They soon learned that the cell phones became so impacted that they wer useless. The same lesson was learned from Oklahoma City and other disasters which have occurred since. Radio has several advantages such as no dependence upon landbased materials, such as discrete frequencies which will not become impacted with uncontrolled transmissions, such as the ability to set up nationwide networks on operators ready and able to assist in many different ways.

As we enter this new year, we might reflect on some of the benefits that MARS has to offer to its membership such as:

- Personal growth that comes from basing your goals, priorities and relationships with others as the posture of the program improves because of your involvement with the program.

- A sense of belonging knowing you are a unique and contributing member.

- A sense of fulfillment knowing you are carrying out the special role of an emergency communicator and you are involved with improving the morale of our deployed military.

and

- A renewed purpose from the fact that as a MARS member, you are participating in a special mission and a destiny that goes beyond day-to-day living.

"The future of Army MARS is ahead of us. We will need your cooperation and by working together we can bring about a new Army MARS."

This new Army MARS proceeds Proud, Professional, and Ready.

As of December 31, 1997, the ARRL had 171,944 members, down slightly from December 1996. There were 910 new members during December 1997.

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Upcoming Shows in Florida - Feb, 1998

Compiled by
Bill Britton, KB4VOL

DATE		LOCATION	NOTES
Feb	7/8	Miami	Dade County Expo Center SW 112th Ave & Coral Way Talk-in on 146.760 or 146.925 INFO: Evelyn, W4WYR (305) 642-4139
Feb	7	Pensacola	Bayfront Municiple Auditorium Talk-in on 146.760 & 444.925 INFO: Bill, WA4YRN (904) 476-8537
Feb	14/15	Orlando	Central Florida Fairgrounds 4300 W. Colonial Way Talk-in on 146.760 INFO: Ken, KD4JQR (407) 961-2465
Feb	21/22	Sarasota	Robarts Sports Arena 3000 Fruitville Rd. Talk-in on 146.919 & 444.925 INFO: Dave, AE4MR (941) 923-3967 INFO: Lee, WA3YMV (352) 799-1638
Mar	1	Zephryhills	"Phinney Fest" at Lions Club 5827 Dean Diary Rd. Talk-in on 147.135 INFO: Ernie, KD4VRV (813) 783-8389
Mar	7	Spring Hill	VFW Hall on Spring Hill Drive Talk-in on 146.715 INFO: Lee, WA3YMV (352) 799-1638
Mar	7	Englewood	Tringali Community Center S.R. 776 Talk-in on 146.700 INFO: George, KA4JKY (941) 697-3445
Mar	28	Stuart	FREE! At Martin County Fairgrounds A1A, south of Stuart Talk-in on 147.060 INFO: Dave, KE4AMW (561) 288-7100
Apr	11	Coral Gables	U of Miami Swapfest (Rain date APR 12) Physics Parking lot Talk-in on 146.865 INFO: Walt, W4DWN (305) 895-0398
Apr		24/25	Gainesville Alachua Co. Fairgrounds SR24 & SR22 Talk-in 146.82 INFO: Larry Walker (352) 377-0683
Oct	4	Maitland	At Bahia Shrine A.R.U. 2300 Pembrook Dr. Talk-in on 147.390 INFO: Cecil, K4KEN (407) 281-9169
Oct	10/11	Tampa	Egypt Temple ARA Hamfest 4050 Dana Shores Drive Talk-in on 146.940 INFO: Jay, K9BSL (813) 822-9107
Nov	7	Sorrento	E. Lake Chamber of Commerce County Rd 437 off SR 46 Talk-in on 147.255 INFO: Chuck, KE4EXM (353) 669-2075

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THE KB4VOL BBS WAS EXTENSIVELY DAMAGED BY LIGHTNING & IS OFF THE AIR

NOTE TEMPORARY CHANGE IN PACKET ADDRESS
Mail: Bill Britton, KB4VOL 8703 S.E. Jardin St.
Hobe Sound, FL 33455
E-Mail: kb4vol@gate.net
(Send additions or changes this way...quicker!)

VISIT OUR FLORIDA HAM WEB SITE! LOTS OF LINKS & THE MONTHLY LISTS!
http://pages.prodigy.com/kb4vol

Hamfest - Englewood

The Englewood Amateur Radio Society will hold HAMCOM '98 on March 7, 1998 from 8AM to 3PM at the Florida Tringali Community Center, SR776 Englewood East. Admission is $3.00 and tables are $10.00. Tailgate with ticket.

For more information, contact George Shreve, KA4JKY at 13591 Martha Ave., Port Charlotte, FL 33981. Phone: 941-697-3445. E-mail: gshreve@ewol.com

Hamfest - Zephyrhills

The Zephyrhills Area ARC will hold the Phinney Fest on Sunday March 1, 1998 from 8:00AM to 2:00PM at the Zephyrhills Lions Club, 5827 Dean Dairy Road, Zephyrhills. Admission is $4.00 and inside tables are $4.00.

For more information write Zaarc, PO Box 1534, Zephyrhills, FL 33539 or call Ernie KD4VRV at 813-783-8389. E-mail: ernamae@zhills.net

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We regret to report the passing of the following Amateur Radio Operators. Please notify SKIP of silent keys in your area.

N2FBW - Richard L. De Angelis, Hernando
W3MAT - Howard R. Harding, Sarasota
N3MBD - Jerry M. Trznadel, Orange Park
AA4CM - Miguel J. Enciso, Coral Gables
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TUBES FOR SALE - Send S.A.S.E. for new list "V". **TYPETRONICS**, P.O. Box 8873, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33310-8873. Ph: 954-583-1340 or FAX 954-583-0777. Fred Schmidt, W4TT.

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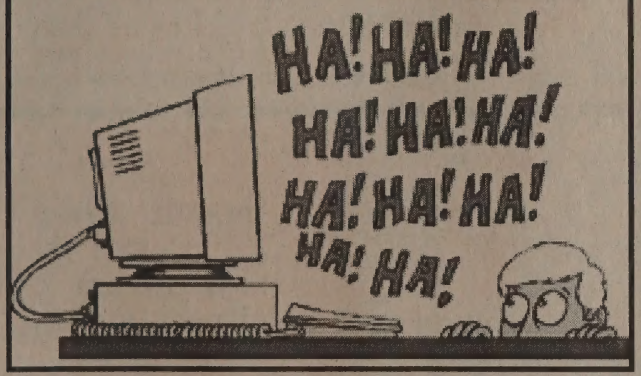

Contacting SKIP

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•E-mail:
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